THE MELANCHOLY of HARUHI SUZUMIYA

11

ART BY GAKU TSUGANO

STORY BY NAGARU TANIGAWA

CHARACTERS BY: NOIZI ITO

HEY, KYON-KUN... CAN I SLEEP HERE...?

WHAT THE HELL ...?

WEREN'T WE JUST IN THE MIDDLE OF A BLIZZARD ON THE MOUNTAIN-SIDE?

OR IS THIS BECAUSE OF THAT?

WHAT IN THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?

THE MELANCHOLY of HARUHI SUZUMIYA

11

ORIGINAL STORY NAGARU TANIGAWA

MANGA GAKU TSUGANO

CHARACTER DESIGN: NOIZI ITO

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...IT'S LIKE THE MARIE CELESTE!

THIS PLACE IS PUTTING A STRAIN ON ME.

...PARTYING AT TSURUYA'S VACATION HOME AS WE SPEAK?

THE ORIGINALS ARE, WELL...

WAIT JUST A MINUTE...

...AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO DOESN'T GET WHAT'S GOING ON?

I WENT OVER TO KOIZUMI'S ROOM TO HEAR THE REST OF WHAT HE HAD TO SAY, AND THEN...

SON OF A...

WHEN YOU'RE ABOUT TO VENTURE INTO A CAVE, YOU SAVE YOUR GAME FIRST TO BE SAFE, NATURALLY.

UUU

THAT WAY, EVEN IF YOU GET KILLED, YOU CAN JUST RELOAD FROM THAT SAVE POINT.

LET'S PRETEND THAT YOU'RE PLAYING A COMPUTER GAME.

A FANTASY RPG.

UUUU (WHOO)

...KOIZUMI.

HAS ANYTHING LIKE THIS HAPPENED BEFORE?

SO WE'RE JUST COPIES? GUINEA PIGS?

EVEN HARUHI? CREATED ONLY TO SEE WHAT OUR REACTIONS WILL BE...?

NO, NOT THAT.

MORE LIKE...

WHEN WE FOUGHT THE CAVE CRICKET, YOU MEAN?

IT'S TRUE WE WERE TRANS-PORTED TO AN ALTERNATE DIMENSION ...

NO... NOTHING LIKE THAT.

ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT MEMORIES OF A PAST LIFE?

AND WE WERE ALL WEARING THESE ARCHAIC ROBES ...

I FEEL LIKE YOU WERE HOLDING A HARP OR SOME-THING.

...WE CAN DEDUCE THE IDENTITIES OF THE AGENT OR AGENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS BLIZZARD, EVEN THIS MANSION, TO A CERTAIN DEGREE.

IN ANY CASE... AT THIS POINT...

WHAT'S THIS PUZZLE PIECE IN MY MEM-ORY?

IT'S LINGER-ING THERE IN MY MIND...

TO (TMP)

FOR EXAMPLE... YOU REMEMBER RYOUKO ASAKURA, YES?

IF I WERE THEM, I'D HAVE DEALT WITH NAGATO FIRST.

IT'S AN ENTITY WITH AS MUCH POWER AS NAGATO— OR MORE.

WHAT-EVER.

I DON'T CARE WHOSE FAULT THIS IS...

...STAGED A COUP D'ÉTAT?

WHAT IF THE RADICAL MINORITY FACTION WITHIN THE DATA OVER-MIND...

WELL, WE'D BETTER THINK OF A WAY TO ESCAPE.

I'M SICK OF THIS PLACE.

I DON'T CARE HOW COMFORTABLE IT IS. I'M NOT SO FED UP WITH MY LIFE THAT I WANT TO SPEND THE REST OF IT HERE.

THE BATH'S FREE.

SO WHO-EVER'S NEXT...

CHA (CLACK)

UMM ...

THEY'RE HAVING JUICE IN THE DINING ROOM.

WHERE ARE HARUHI AND NAGATO?

IF SUZUMIYA-SAN NOTICES THIS ABNORMALITY AND UNLEASHES HER OWN POWER...

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THIS MAN-SION?

PERSONALLY, I FIND IT INCREDIBLY UNNATURAL, BUT...

ASAHINA-SAN...I HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOU.

THAT MAY ACTUALLY BE THE GOAL OF WHOEVER CREATED THIS SITUATION.

LIKE CONDUCTING NUCLEAR TESTING IN AN ISOLATED AREA.

GOOOO (WHOOOSH)

THIS MANSION ...?

UMM...

BUT WHAT ABOUT KOIZUMI'S EXPERIMENT? THE FLOW OF TIME'S SCREWED UP, ISN'T IT?

FOR THE MYSTERY GAME THAT KOIZUMI-KUN PREPARED.

SUZUMIYA-SAN THINKS IT MIGHT BE...UM...

...FORE-SHADOW-ING?

...WASN'T IT?

OH, BUT THAT WAS PART OF THE GIMMICK...

ASA-HINA-SAN.

CAN YOU CONTACT THE FUTURE?

RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW.

WASN'T TIME SUPPOSED TO BE ASAHINA-SAN'S SPE-CIALTY?

UH...

HUH!? I COULDN'T POSSIBLY TELL YOU ABOUT THAT!

TEE-HEE, IT'S CLASSIFIED INFORMA-TION!

...BEFORE SUZUMIYA-SAN GETS MAD AT YOU!

WORKING...

THIS ISN'T

YOU'D BETTER HURRY AND TAKE A BATH...

ANYWAY, WHAT TIME IS IT?

IT'S NOT COMPLETELY DARK OUT—BUT THAT JUST MAKES IT CREEPIER.

KOOOON (DOONG)

WHAT AM I GONNA DO...?

LET'S GO PLAY IN THE REC ROOM!

I KNOW, RIGHT?

WE CARRIED OUR SKIS AROUND FOR HOURS, AFTER ALL.

NAH.

LET'S GET SOME SLEEP FIRST.

DOUBLE POINTS FOR THIRTEEN ORPHANS AND FOUR CONCEALED TRIPLETS. OKAY? ♡

I HAVEN'T PLAYED MAH-JONGG IN FOREVER.

EVERY-BODY READY?

WELL, PICK THIS UP TOMORROW.

I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE STILL WANTS TO PLAY...

OKAY I GUESS

YEAH ...

ARE WE JUST GONNA HAVE TO ASK NAGATO FOR HELP AGAIN?

SO WHAT TO DO?

THAT MIGHT BE EXACTLY WHAT OUR ENEMY IS TRYING TO PROVOKE...

IF WE'RE NOT CAREFUL WITH HARUHI, SHE COULD EXPLODE.

...ASA-HINA-SAN?

GACHA (CLICK)

Kyon-kun...

GYO (SHOCK)

GISHI (CREAK)

BASA (FWUMP)

May I sleep here?

I get nervous by myself.

GISHI

GISHI

It's okay, right?

SOME-THING'S WRONG!

But maybe here...

I can't sleep alone...

WHA ...

Please ...

PUCHI (POP)

IT'S NOT A MATTER OF "OKAY" OR NOT...!

YOU'RE NOT MY ASAHINA-SAN!

YOU'RE NOT ASAHINA-SAN.

WHO ARE YOU?

JUST LIKE THE IMAGES SLEEPING ON THE HARD DRIVE OF THE COMPUTER ...

THAT'S RIGHT...

YOU DON'T HAVE THE STAR-SHAPED MOLE.

WHO ARE YOU?

ARE YOU THE ONE WHO CREATED THIS MANSION?

WHY DID YOU—

BA (LEAP)

WAI...

BAN (SLAM)

BA (DASH)

THAT'S WEIRD, THE DOOR WAS LOCKED.

WAH!?

GACHA (CLACK)

HOW'D SHE GET IN?

BAN

...YOU WERE IN MY ROOM, WEREN'T YOU?

HUH? WAIT, WEREN'T YOU... JUST A SECOND AGO, YOU...

WELL, WELL...

WHAT ABOUT YOU? GOING TO THE BATH-ROOM?

WHY DID EVERYBODY COME OUT OF THEIR ROOMS AT ONCE?

WAIT, WHAT'S UP WITH EVERY-BODY?

PUI (FWIP)

YOU WERE ACTING COM-PLETELY OUT OF CHARAC-TER... UH...

I HAD A WEIRD DREAM.

A DREAM WHERE YOU SNEAKED INTO MY ROOM.

SAME HERE.

YOU ALSO APPEARED IN FRONT OF ME.

UM... AND, WELL ...

...IT JUST SEEMED REALLY WEIRD.

WHAT ABOUT YOU, ASAHINA-SAN?

IN ANY CASE, THEY WERE QUITE UNLIKE YOU.

YOUR ACTIONS WERE... LET'S CALL THEM "UNPLEAS-ANT."

...BUT SHE SEEMED KINDA WEIRD, AND_

UM, SUZU-MIYA-SAN CAME TO ME_

I CAN'T REALLY EXPLAIN IT, BUT LIKE A FAKE_

KAAA (BLUSH)

YOU...

Y...

FURA (SWAY)

NAGATO, WHAT ABOUT YOU?

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?

IMPOSTORS SHOWING UP IN EVERY-BODY'S ROOMS?

DOSA (FWUMP)

HAA (PANT)

YUKI?

WHOA, SHE'S BURNING UP!

YUKI, ARE YOU OKAY? HEY, YUKI!

TA (DASH)

YUKI, WHAT'S WRONG?

DA (DASH)

DA

KYON, FIND SOME ICE PACKS.

RIGHT.

TA

KOIZUMI-KUN, CARRY YUKI TO HER BED.

MIKURU-CHAN, GET SOME WET TOWELS READY.

O-OKAY!

HURRY!

THERE SHOULD BE SOME SOMEWHERE.

DA

DA

WE'RE IN SERIOUS TROUBLE.

I'D BEEN HOPING SHE MIGHT GET TO LIVE A NORMAL, PEACEFUL LIFE FOR A WHILE TOO...

DA

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...FOR NAGATO TO ACTUALLY COLLAPSE ...

DA (STOMP)

DA

DA

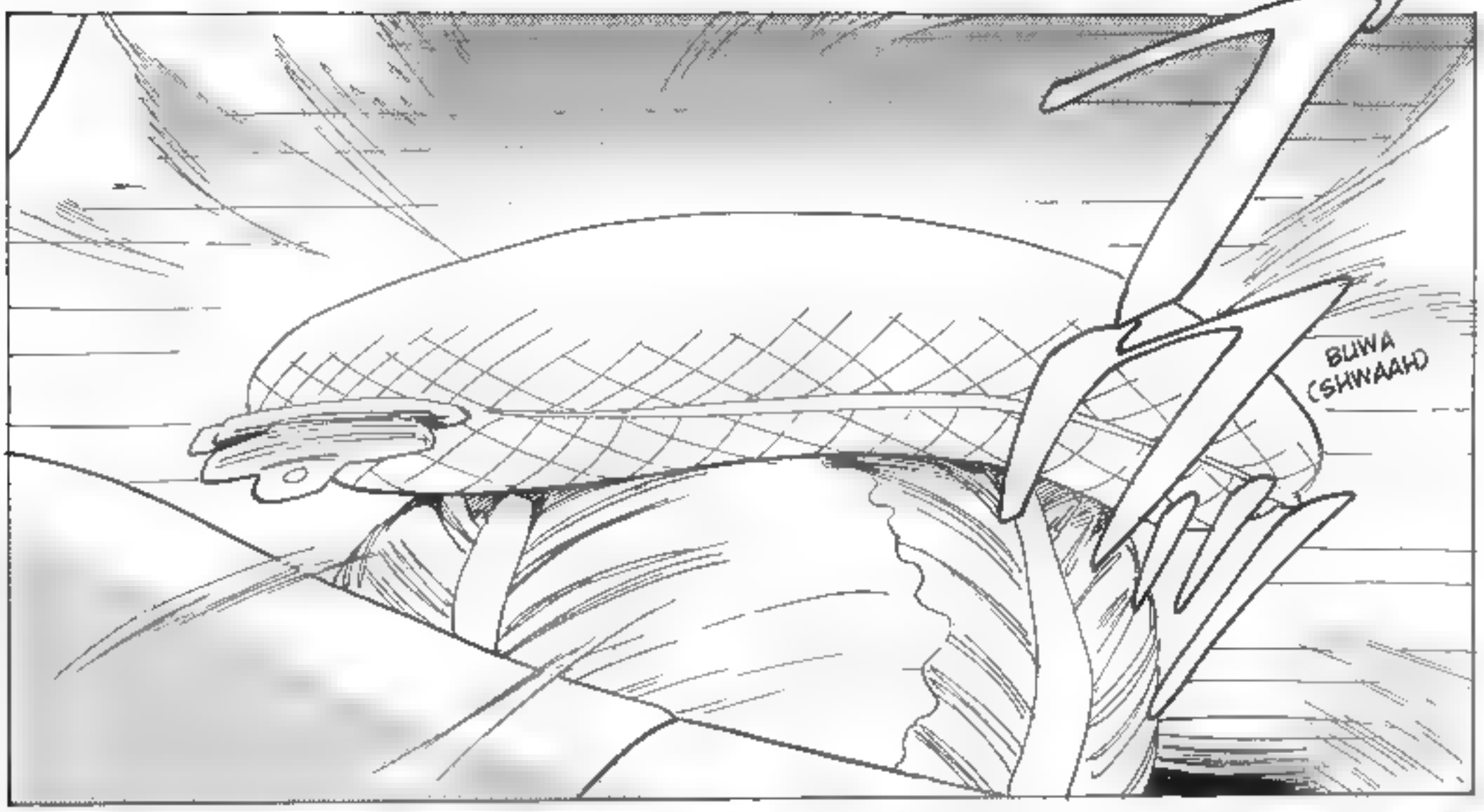
THOSE BAS-TARDS ...

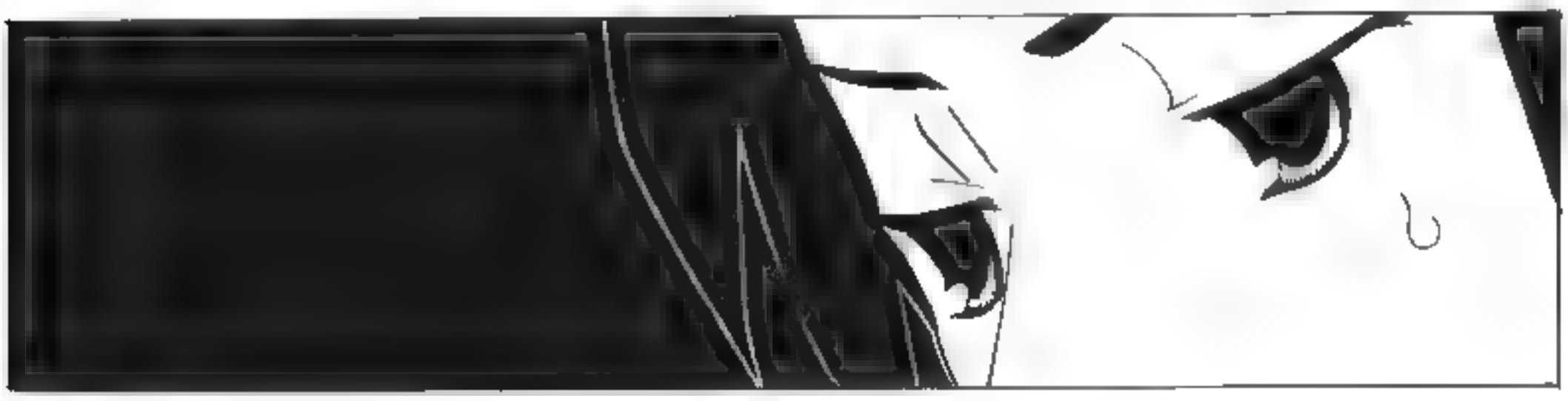
...WAIT.

TO (TMP)

...ICE PACKS.

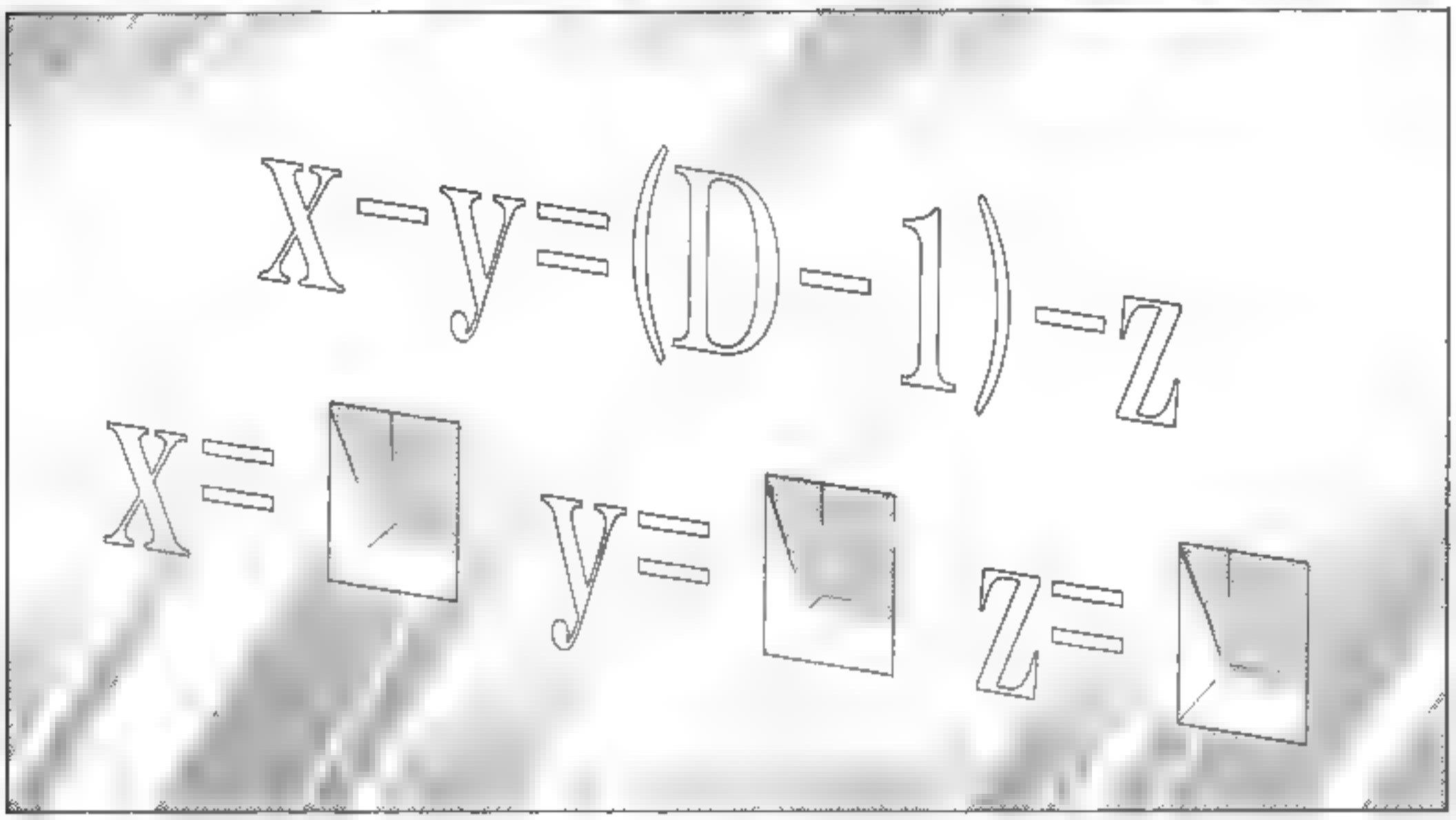
JIIII (CREEEAK)





WE CAN'T STAY HERE ANY LONGER...

WOULD YOU TAKE A LOOK AT THIS?
AH, PER-FECT TIMING.
WHAT'RE YOU SCREWING AROUND FOR?


X-y=(D-1)-Z
X=
y=
Z=

AT LEAST, NOT WHEN WE ENTERED THE MANSION ...
IT WAS NOT.
WAS THIS HERE BEFORE?
WHAT IS THIS...A METAL PANEL?

PIECES THAT WILL CORRECTLY SOLVE THIS EQUATION.

WE SEEM TO BE BEING ASKED TO CHOOSE PIECES.

A MATH PUZZLE?

BUT I BET WE NEED TO SATISFY SOME OTHER CONDITION.

I FEEL LIKE I'VE SEEN THIS EQUATION BEFORE...

IF THE GOAL IS TO SIMPLY MAKE THE EQUATION BALANCE, THEN THERE ARE COUNTLESS POSSIBLE CORRECT SOLUTIONS.

UNFORTUNATELY, I SUCK AT MATH.

MAKES MY HEAD HURT.

WELL, THE ONE THING I CAN SAY...

IT LOOKS LIKE WE DON'T HAVE TO SOLVE FOR IT ...

WHAT'S THIS D?

X... Y...

...AND D?

THE DOOR IS LOCKED.

KEY?

IN-DEED.

...IS THAT PROBABLY THE KEY.

MADE BY NAGATO-SAN, I THINK IT IS OUR SOLE MEANS OF ESCAPE.

THIS EQUATION IS THE KEY THAT UNLOCKS IT.

A WAR OF INFORMA-TION, IF YOU WILL.

...I BELIEVE IT WAS PART OF A LIMITED CONFLICT OF SOME KIND.

WHEN WE WERE SEALED WITHIN THIS ALTER-NATE DIMEN-SION...

I WONDER, THEN, IF THAT IS WHAT THIS EQUATION IS.

IF WE CAN SOLVE IT, WE'LL BE ABLE TO RETURN. IF NOT, WE'LL BE HERE FOREVER.

NAGATO-SAN HAS COUNTERED IT BY PROVIDING US A MEANS OF ESCAPE.

AND THEN THIS DOOR, HUH?

IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER, NAGATO-SAN COLLAPSED...

EARLIER, EACH OF US EXPERIENCED RATHER STRANGE DREAMS.

$x-y=(D-$

$\square \quad y= \quad \square$

WITH HER LINK TO THE DATA OVERMIND CURRENTLY SEVERED...

...THIS MAY BE THE ABSOLUTE LIMIT OF WHAT SHE COULD MANAGE.

I HAVE NO DOUBT IT HAS SOME RELEVANCE.

THOUGH I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE CONCRETE CONNECTION IS.

THIS PLACE IS PUTTING A STRAIN ON ME.

NAGATO...

EVEN THOUGH WE COULDN'T SEE OR HEAR IT.

YOU WERE FIGHTING AN INVISIBLE ENEMY THE WHOLE TIME, WEREN'T YOU?

NOW IT'S OUR TURN TO FIGHT.

$$x-y=(D-1)\Gamma$$

$$x=\square\quad y=\square\quad z=$$

AND THIS IS THE HOLE YOU MANAGED TO OPEN.

OF COURSE.

UTOPIA AND DYSTOPIA ARE TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN, AFTER ALL.

KOIZUMI, LET'S BUST OUT OF THIS JOINT.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?

NO, ACTUALLY ...

WHAT, YOU'RE JUST BICKERING WITH KOIZUMI-KUN?

THINK ABOUT YUKI A LITTLE, WILL YA?

KYON, WHERE'RE THE ICE PACKS?

ISN'T THAT EULER?

THAT'S WHAT THE TWO OF US WERE JUST WONDERING.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND IT?

WHAT'S THIS?

HUH? OILER?

WELL, I DON'T KNOW HIS FIRST NAME.

LEONHARD EULER, YES.

...I SEE.

PROBABLY.

WAIT, WAIT, WAIT!

THE D IS FOR THE NUMBER OF DIMENSIONS, I THINK.

I'M AMAZED YOU RECOGNIZED IT.

$-V=D$

$\square y=$

EULER'S POLYHEDRON THEOREM.

THIS MUST BE A VARIATION OF IT...

THE KÖNIGS-BERG BRIDGES PROB-LEM.

SURELY YOU'VE HEARD OF THIS ONE.

THE WHAT-NOW THEOREM?

EULER? WHAT?

...AND SEVEN BRIDGES CON-NECTING THEM TO EACH OTHER AND TO THE MAIN-LAND...

THERE ARE TWO ISLANDS IN A RIVER...

KÖ...?

IT'S IMPOS-SIBLE, RIGHT?

EXCEL-LENT ANSWER.

YOSHIZAKI-SENSEI WAS RAMBLING ON ABOUT IT IN MATH CLASS.

YOU HAVE TO CROSS ALL THE BRIDGES ONLY ONCE, RIGHT?

THE "BRIDGE PROBLEM" IS ABOUT PLANES.

BUT EULER SHOWED THAT IT ALSO APPLIES TO SOLID BODIES.

SOLID BODIES ...

EULER'S POLY-HEDRON THEOREM.

FOR EVERY CONVEX POLY-HEDRON ...

...YOU CAN TAKE THE NUMBER OF VERTICES, PLUS THE NUMBER OF FACES, MINUS THE NUMBER OF EDGES, AND ALWAYS END UP WITH TWO.

...!?

?

PERHAPS A SIMPLE DIAGRAM WOULD HELP.

HEY, CAN YOU WRITE THERE?

AND WHERE'D YOU GET THAT PEN?

KYU (SQUEAK)

KYU

HERE, A HEXA-HEDRON.

EVEN WITH A DIFFERENT SOLID...

VERTICES = 5
FACES = 5
EDGES = 8

$5 + 5 - 8 = 2$

OKAY, THAT MUCH I SEE.

EIGHT PLUS SIX MINUS TWELVE IS TWO. YOU SEE?

THERE ARE EIGHT VERTICES AND SIX FACES.

...AND TWELVE EDGES.

THIS THEOREM ALSO APPLIES TO TWO-DIMENSIONAL PLANES.

THAT IS ALSO QUITE SIMPLE.

SO WHY DID HARUHI MENTION THE NUMBER OF DIMENSIONS?

I DEMONSTRATED SOLIDS JUST NOW...

SO THIS TIME LET'S TRY A FIVE-POINTED STAR.

SURE, WHATEVER.

YOU REALLY SEEM TO BE ENJOYING THIS.

IN THIS CASE, THE ANSWER WILL ALWAYS BE ONE.

CORRECT.

...ONE?

10 (VERTICES) + 6 (FACES) - 15 (EDGES) IS...

D STANDS FOR DIMENSION.

IN OTHER WORDS, WITH THREE-DIMENSIONAL SOLIDS, THE ANSWER IS TWO, AND WITH TWO-DIMENSIONAL PLANES, ONE.

OKAY, SO WHAT'S THE ANSWER TO THE QUIZ, HERE?

I DON'T KNOW.

HUH?

IT ALSO APPLIES TO IRREGULAR FIGURES.

VERTICES = 7
FACES = 1
EDGES = 7

$7 + 1 - 7 = 1$

$\underset{x}{7} - \underset{y}{7} = (\underset{D}{2} - 1) - \underset{z}{1}$

MMM... OKAY, I'M BARELY KEEPING UP.

THERE'S NO POINT, THEN!

HEY, YOU GUYS!

WITHOUT A SOLID OR PLANE TO APPLY IT TO, WE CAN'T DETERMINE THE ANSWER.

THIS IS ONLY A FORMULA.

ANY-WAY, KYON! YOU HAVE TO GO SEE YUKI LATER.

PUNSUKA KABOOM

YEAH. PRETTY MUCH

HOW MUCH TIME'RE YOU GONNA WASTE HERE!? THIS DOESN'T MATTER!

NAGATO... CALLED MY NAME?

WHAT ...?

"KYON," SHE SAID.

SHE WAS MUMBLING YOUR NAME DELIRI-OUSLY.

IS THIS... SOME KIND OF MESSAGE?

SHE'S NEVER DONE THAT BEFORE.

C'MON, SELF!

NAGATO'S SICK, AND SHE'S TRYING TO TELL YOU SOMETHING ...

SHE ALWAYS JUST CALLS ME "YOU."

SNOWY MOUNTAIN SYNDROME III : END

SNOWY MOUNTAIN SYNDROME IV

SHE WAS MUMBLING YOUR NAME DELIRIOUSLY.

THIS HAS TO MEAN SOME-THING.

WHAT? THAT'S WEIRD.

SHE'S NEVER DONE THAT BEFORE.

THINK, DAMMIT!

WAIT, SUZU-MIYA-SAN.

IS THAT TRUE?

SURE. I MEAN

OKAY, WELL ...

THIS IS VERY IMPOR-TANT.

PLEASE THINK BACK.

ARE YOU SURE YOU DIDN'T MISHEAR A DIFFERENT WORD?

ARE YOU SURE SHE SAID "KYON?"

SHE WAS REALLY QUIET.

I DIDN'T HEAR HER VERY CLEARLY.

IT COULD'VE BEEN "HYON" OR "JYON," I SUPPOSE.

IF YOU WERE UNSURE ABOUT THE FIRST SOUND, BUT HEARD THE LAST PART CLEARLY ...

WHAT?

AH, I SEE.

I DON'T THINK IT WAS "KYON" OR "JYON," THEN.

WHO EVEN CARES?

IT DEF-INITELY WASN'T "KYAN" OR "KYUN," THOUGH.

WHAT'S FOUR HAVE TO DO WITH ANY-THING?

YON?

YES, AS IN THE JAPA-NESE WORD FOR FOUR.

I BELIEVE SHE SAID "YON."

YEAH, YEAH.

YOU BETTER COME BY AND SEE HER LATER. GOT THAT?

THIS IS NO TIME FOR A MATH QUIZ!

YOU SHOULD BE MORE WORRIED ABOUT YUKI!

WE NOW HAVE THE REQUIRED VALUES.

AS FOR X, Y, AND Z...

YES.

KOI-ZUMI, DOES THAT MEAN ...

LET'S DRAW A DIAGRAM ...

... SHOWING WHICH APPARI-TION VISITED EACH ROOM.

KYU (SQUEAK)

THINK BACK TO THE PHENO-MENON THAT WE EXPER-IENCED A SHORT WHILE AGO.

THE IMPOSTORS THAT SUZUMIYA DISMISSED AS A DREAM BUT THAT I FOUND RATHER REALISTIC.

THEN, IN ASAHINA-SAN'S ROOM, THERE WAS SUZUMIYA-SAN.

KYU

KYU

ASAHINA-SAN WAS THE ONE WHO VISITED YOUR ROOM, I BELIEVE.

THIS IS YOU.

KYU

I WON'T ASK.

I KNEW SOME-THING WAS WRONG.

YOU WERE VERY UNLIKE YOUR-SELF.

AND YOU ALSO APPEARED IN MY ROOM.

H

M

K

YOU WERE THE ONE WHO APPEARED IN SUZUMIYA-SAN'S ROOM.

YEAH ...

KYU

NAGATO ALSO SAID YOU WERE IN HER ROOM.

KYU

THESE WERE ALL RELATED.

THE IMPOSTORS THAT WERE NEITHER DREAM NOR REALITY...

...WERE ILLUSIONS CREATED BY NAGATO FOR US.

H

M

K

KO

N

DON (BANG)

THE FACE IS A TRIANGLE FORMED BY SUZUMIYA-SAN, ASAHINA-SAN, AND YOU.

AND THERE ARE FIVE EDGES.

SINCE IT'S ON A PLANE, THAT MEANS D WILL EQUAL TWO.

THE NUMBER OF VERTICES IS THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE, SO FIVE.

WE SIMPLY NEED TO APPLY THIS FIGURE TO THE FORMULA ON THE DOOR.

A DIAGRAM THAT CORRESPONDS TO THE FAKES WE EACH SAW.

I DON'T HAVE TIME TO BE IMPRESSED WITH YOU.

SO I'LL JUST STICK THESE IN...

X = 5
Y = 5
Z = 1

THAT'S THE ANSWER.

BOTH SIDES EQUAL ZERO.

I'LL JUST ASK, THEN.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

THERE IS ALSO THE POSSI-BILITY THAT THIS IS A DELE-TION PRO-GRAM.

ARE YOU SURE?

...THERE'S NO NEED FOR US TO LEAVE THIS ALTERNATE SPACE.

IF WE ARE MERELY COPIES FOR THE SAKE OF SIMULATION...

AND I AM ASKING IF YOU ARE WILLING TO TAKE THAT RISK.

IN OTHER WORDS, WE WOULD BE COMMIT-TING A FORM OF SUICIDE.

IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT SOLVING THIS EQUATION ...

...WILL TRIGGER A PROCESS THAT WILL DELETE OUR EXISTENCES.

I HAVE NO DESIRE TO LIVE FOR-EVER.

I TRUST NAGATO.

THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR ME.

BUT I AM ALSO STRONGLY OPPOSED TO DISAP-PEARING HERE AND NOW. I AM ME.

...I SEE.

AT LEAST WHERE THE SOLUTION TO THIS EQUATION IS CON-CERNED.

I THINK YOUR THEORY IS RIGHT.

I ALSO TRUST YOU.

YOU SEEM TO BE ENJOYING IT WELL ENOUGH.

AFTER ALL, THAT'S MY JOB AND MY DUTY.

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, I CAN ONLY FOLLOW YOU AND SUZUMIYA-SAN.

I SHALL LEAVE IT UP TO YOU.

...THERE IS A PROMISE I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE.

ASSUMING WE ARE ABLE TO RETURN TO ORDINARY SPACE...

...I WILL SIDE WITH YOU, JUST ONCE.

...AND IF THAT SITUATION SHOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO THE "AGENCY"...

JARA (RATTLE)

IF A SITUATION SHOULD ARISE WHERE NAGATO IS IN TROUBLE ...

PERSONALLY, I CONSIDER NAGATO AN IMPORTANT FELLOW MEMBER.

FOR ONCE, I'D LIKE TO STAND BY HER SIDE.

SO ALLYING MYSELF WITH YOU WOULD BE EQUIVALENT TO HELPING NAGATO, IF A BIT ROUNDABOUT.

UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES, YOU WOULD CERTAINLY BE THE FIRST TO BACK NAGATO.

FORGET ABOUT ME.

DO IT FOR NAGATO.

...BUT BEFORE THAT, I AM THE LIEUTENANT BRIGADE CHIEF OF THE SOS BRIGADE.

I MAY BE A MEMBER OF THE "AGENCY" ...

...I WENT ALONE TO ANOTHER DIMENSION AND MANAGED TO RETURN...

BACK IN THE MIDDLE OF DECEMBER ...

AND I'LL DO IT AGAIN NOW.

WITH THE REST OF THE SOS BRIGADE THIS TIME.

KU (PUSH)

KU

KU

DO

I'VE GOT NO USE FOR THIS DRAGON PALACE.

WE WON'T BE THE ONES DISAPPEAR-ING...

KASHI (SHIK)

DO (DMP)

1

MIKURU! HARU-NYAN!

WHAT THE...?

...PE?

IT'S THE SKI SLO...

WHA?

YUKI! ARE YOU OKAY?

REALLY!?

BUT YOU HAD A TERRIBLE FEVER...

REALLY?

MUKKURI (RISE)

I ONLY TRIP-PED.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR FEVER!?

YOUR FEVER ...

...IN THE MANSION ...

WAS IT A DREAM?

NOT A CLUE.

SURELY IT WASN'T ALL...A DREAM?

MUUUUN (PINCH)

YOU'RE NOT... HOT AT ALL.

THE BLIZ-ZARD... THE MAN-SION...

I AM FINE.

NO, YOU ARE NOT!

ボン
BON (BUMP)

CLIMB ON MY BACK.

I'LL CARRY YOU, YUKI.

WELL, WHAT-EVER.

ZA

ZA

ZA

I JUST GET THAT FEELING, SOME-HOW.

ZA

YOU NEED REST!

ZA (CRUNCH)

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON HERE OR WHY I'M SO CONFUSED ...

HEY! GO CALL THE CAR!

ZA

ZA

ZA

...BUT I'M NOT LETTING YOU PUSH YOURSELF.

BLURORORO
GVROOOOM

NAGATO TRIED TO CONVINCE HARUHI OF HER HEALTH BUT EVENTUALLY DID AS SHE WAS TOLD.

AFTER-WARD...

...TSURUYA CONTACTED ARAKAWA WHO BROUGHT THE CAR AROUND.

HEY, SO...

BUT IT WASN'T THAT MUCH. JUST A SUDDEN FLURRY, REALLY.

HMM, I GUESS THERE WAS, LIKE, MAYBE TEN MINUTES OF HEAVY SNOWFALL?

UH, WHAT ABOUT THE BLIZ-ZARD?

...WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?

YOU WERE TROMPING DOWN THE SLOPES AND CARRYING YOUR SKIS...

SHE GOT RIGHT BACK UP, THOUGH.

NAGATO-CHAN WAS LEADING THE PACK, THEN SHE FELL OVER.

PAA

THEN THE FIVE OF YOU CAME SCOOT-SCOOTING DOWN...

...AND I WAS LIKE, HUH?

...WHAT HAD BEEN A HALF-DAY OR MORE TO US SEEMED LIKE JUST A FEW MINUTES TO TSURUYA-SAN.

BURORORO

...THE ONE THING I KNEW WAS...

AS TO WHAT THIS MEANT, WELL...

SIGN: HIGHLAND LODGE 200M AHEAD

高原ロッジ
先200M→

THERE WASN'T ANY-THING TO SAY.

THIS WAS REALITY. THE REST WAS ILLUSION.

THIS WAS REAL.

EVEN I CAN TELL THAT MUCH.

...MIKURU AND NAGATO-CHAN SEEM KINDA...NOT LIKE OTHER PEOPLE.

NYA HA!

HEY, THIS IS CHANGING THE SUBJECT, BUT...

HAH, LONG AGO!

YOU NOTICED.

...BUT IT MUST'VE BEEN SOME-THING CRAZY!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU GUYS WERE DOING ...

HARU-NYAN TOO, KINDA!

NYA HA HA HA

WELL, AT LEAST THEY'RE NOT BREAK-ING ANY LAWS.

OH, BUT DON'T TELL MIKURU! SHE TOTALLY THINKS SHE'S ACTING LIKE A NORMAL PERSON.

I WON'T ASK WHAT MIKURU REALLY IS.

'S PROBABLY HARD TO EXPLAIN, ANYWAY.

I CAN TELL— WE CAN SMELL OUR OWN KIND.

YUP! BUT ANYWAY, YOU'RE NORMAL, KYON.

HARUHI ...

DOESN'T MATTER, WE'RE STILL FRIENDS!

SAY HI-HI TO MIKURU FOR ME!

SHE'LL BE WAY BETTER AT PRETENDING TO BE A NORMAL PERSON THAN I AM.

FORGET ABOUT THE JUNIOR MEMBER OR HONORARY ADVISOR STUFF.

JUST RECRUIT TSURUYA FOR THE BRIGADE, ALREADY.

STILL ...

...THAT MOVIE YOU MADE FOR THE SCHOOL FESTIVAL.

WAS IT BASED ON A TRUE STORY?

I FEEL LIKE I HAD THIS REALLY REALISTIC DREAM.

WE WENT TO A MANSION AND TOOK A BATH...

HEY, KYON.

UH, WELL ...

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

BU (BFFT)

MIKURU-CHAN SAID SHE REMEMBERS THE SAME THINGS I DO.

GROUP HYPNOSIS.

I ALSO REMEMBER SOMETHING SIMILAR.

THIS IS BAD.

I HAVEN'T COME UP WITH ANY EXPLA-NATION BESIDES "IT WAS A HALLUCI-NATION."

THAT KOIZUMI— SUCH A HUCK-STER.

YOU'RE PROB-ABLY RIGHT!

...YOU'D BE SKEPTICAL, MAKING IT IMPOS-SIBLE.

...IF SOMEONE WERE TO TELL YOU THEY WERE GOING TO HYPNOTIZE YOU...

IT'S A BIT DIFFERENT FROM ARTIFICIAL HYPNOTISM, BUT...

YES, IN YOUR CASE, SUZUMIYA-SAN...

ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH "HIGHWAY HYPNOSIS"?

THERE IS A PRECEDENT FOR THIS SORT OF THING.

AND AT A FIXED RHYTHM, NO LESS.

WE WERE WALKING THROUGH A BLIZZARD AND COULD SEE NOTHING BUT WHITE.

...AND LULL HIM TO SLEEP.

LIKE WHAT HAP-PENED TO US.

...THE EVENLY SPACED LIGHTS CAN PLACE THE DRIVER IN A STATE OF HYPNOSIS ...

IF YOU DRIVE ALONG A STRAIGHT HIGHWAY FOR EXTENDED PERIODS OF TIME...

THERE ARE MANY EXAMPLES OF THIS.

WE PAT BABIES ON THEIR BACKS WHEN WE WANT THEM TO SLEEP.

RIDING IN A MOVING TRAIN CAR MAKES YOU SLEEPY.

"IS THERE SOMEWHERE WE COULD GO TO TAKE REFUGE?"

SURELY ONE OF US MUTTERED SOMETHING ALONG THOSE LINES.

"SOMEPLACE COMFORTABLE WHERE WE COULD REST...?"

DAMN... HE'S LAYING IT ON PRETTY THICK.

IT WOULDN'T BE STRANGE TO BE HALLUCINATING.

AFTER ALL, IT WAS AN EXTREME SITUATION.

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I GUESS ...

HMM ... I WONDER

I'M SURE OF IT.

THE SOUND OF NAGATO-SAN TRIPPING BROUGHT US BACK TO OUR SENSES.

NYOOON!

MY MEMORY'S GETTING HAZIER AND HAZIER.

HEH!

GATAN (TUNK)

I MEAN ...

... THERE'S NO WAY THERE'D JUST HAPPEN TO BE A MANSION BUILT RIGHT THERE.

I GUESS WE CAN JUST LEAVE IT AT THAT.

LIKE HE WAS TELLING ME TO JUST CALM DOWN.

SHAMISEN WAS GROOMING HIMSELF ON THE FLOOR.

NIGHT FINALLY FELL ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WINTER TRIP.

BUT HARUHI PITCHED A FIT EVERY TIME, PILING COVERS ON TOP OF HER.

NAGATO WANTED TO GET OUT OF BED.

THE NIGHT SKY IS QUITE STUN-NING.

...IN THE END, THEY WOULD BE ONLY DREAMS, NOTHING MORE.

EVEN IF SHE WERE TO HAVE PLEA-SANT DREAMS ...

AS FOR ME...

...I DIDN'T THINK THERE WAS ANY NEED TO FORCE HER TO SLEEP.

...WOULD PROBABLY BE THE MOST UNDER-STANDABLE WAY OF LOOKING AT IT.

A CREATION OF AN ENTITY HOSTILE TO NAGATO AND THE DATA OVERMIND...

STUFF LIKE WHAT THAT MANSION REALLY WAS.

KINDA PUTS STUFF IN PERSPEC-TIVE.

LIKE WHETHER HARUHI REALLY BELIEVES THAT STORY OF YOURS.

THERE'S OTHER STUFF TOO.

THAT'S AWFULLY CONVEN-IENT.

"EXPED-IENCY."

SHALL I TELL YOU THE MOST IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE I'VE LEARNED DOING THIS JOB?

I CAN'T IMAGINE SHE DOES.

IF SHE STARTS WORRY-ING ABOUT SUCH THINGS, THERE'LL BE NO END TO IT.

AFTER ALL, HERE I AM.

THE STARS HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE ME THINK MAYBE THAT'S ENOUGH.

THERE'D BEEN NO MEANING IN THAT LIFE

BUT I LEARNED SOMETHING ON [illegible]

WE COULD'VE JUST BEEN SATISFIED WITH AN ORDINARY LIFE

PATH,

THERE'S NOTHING TO PROVE ANY CONTINUITY BETWEEN THEN AND NOW.

WELL, PROB-ABLY.

ARE YOU SAYING WE'RE NOT THE SAME PEOPLE WE WERE THEN?

I'M TRIPPING UP ON THAT PHRASE.

WAIT A SEC.

OR AN ILLUSION... THAT MUCH IS INARGUABLE.

IT WAS JUST A DAY-DREAM.

KOTO (TMP)

IT EXISTS TO GUARANTEE CONTINUITY FOR IMPORTANT DATA.

THAT'S WHAT A BACKUP IS...

OH, DIDN'T I TELL YOU?

EVEN IN A NORMAL LIFE, MOST OF THE CELLS IN YOUR BODY ARE REPLACED WITHIN A YEAR.

IT'S ONLY A THEORY.

THE MOMENT WE ACTIVATED THAT KEY, WE WERE ERASED.

THAT POSSI-BILITY CANNOT BE REFUTED.

...SHOULD WE OFFER THEM THANKS?

IF THEIR EXISTENCE SUBSTANTIATES OUR OWN...

DIFFERENT SELVES, SOME-WHERE NOT HERE...

THAT'S TERRITORY FOR S.F. WRITERS TO COVER.

...WELL, I'M NO PHILO-SOPHER.

IT SURE WAS A NICE BATH, THOUGH.

I'LL ADMIT THAT MUCH.

I COULD ONLY HOPE THAT IF NAGATO COULD DREAM, SHE WOULD HAVE SWEET ONES, IF ONLY FOR TONIGHT.

DOESN'T LOOK LIKE WE'LL HAVE A BLIZZARD TONIGHT.

Snowy Mountain Syndrome IV : END

THE DAY AFTER THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE BLIZZARD INCIDENT.

BY THE CALENDAR, IT WAS DECEMBER 31ST.

WE HAD COME TO THE BRINK OF A PROJECT THAT HAD BEEN IN THE PLANNING STAGES FOR SOME TIME.

BUT UNLIKE LAST TIME, WE KNEW IT WAS A GAME THIS TIME AROUND.

IT WAS A MYSTERY GAME THAT OVER-ACHIEVER KOIZUMI HAD SET UP.

THE WINTER VERSION OF AN EVENT WE'D FAILED TO PULL OFF LAST SUMMER.

SO WE'RE NOT GOING OUTSIDE, THEN?

I'M STILL KINDA WORRIED ABOUT YUKI.

AND ON THAT NOTE ...

...THINGS CAN NOW PROCEED IN AN SOS BRIGADE-STYLE—OR SHOULD I SAY HARUHI-STYLE—FASHION, SO...

YOU NEED REST!

PASA (FWAP)

I AM FINE.

WE'RE GOING TO PLAY INSIDE TODAY.

NAGATO, HOW'RE YOU FEELING?

AT LEAST STAY INSIDE FOR TODAY.

NO INTENSE EXERCISE OR VIGOROUS ACTIVITY.

NOT UNTIL I'M SURE YOU'RE ALL RIGHT.

BUT FOR TODAY, SNOW SPORTS WERE TOTALLY OFF-LIMITS.

FROM THE WINDOW, THE WEATHER ON THE SKI SLOPES LOOKED PERFECT.

LET'S PUSH THE PLAN FOR-WARD, THEN.
I HAD ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO START IN THE EVENING AND END AROUND MIDNIGHT, BUT WE CAN BEGIN EARLIER.
I WOULDN'T WANT TO LEAVE NAGATO BEHIND JUST TO GO OUTSIDE.
I DON'T MIND.
THE WEATHER FORECAST CALLS FOR SNOW SHOWERS AROUND NOON.
ACTUALLY, IT NEEDS TO START SNOWING AGAIN BEFORE THAT CAN HAPPEN.
CAN'T WE JUST START NOW?
YAHOO!
IN ANTICIPATION OF SUCH A SITUATION, I'VE BROUGHT SEVERAL GAMES.
WE CAN PLAY INDOORS ALL DAY, IF NEED BE.

AND MORI-SAN HAS BEEN OUR MAID.

ALTHOUGH BOTH OF THEM ARE WATCHING HARUHI. JUST LIKE KOIZUMI...

SURE, WE COULD PLAY, BUT I'M WORRIED ABOUT THESE TWO.

ARAKAWA-SAN'S BEEN ACTING AS BUTLER AND CHEF SINCE YESTERDAY.

NO, THAT'S QUITE ALL RIGHT.

THIS IS MY JOB, AFTER ALL.

CAN I HELP?

...THEY ARE MEMBERS OF THE SAME AGENCY.

AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT I'VE HEARD, BUT WHO REALLY KNOWS.

THAT'S KINDA SCARY

LOOKS LIKE HE SAW RIGHT THROUGH ME.

IT'S A GIFT OF OUR OCCUPA-TIONAL TRAINING.

I GOTTA SAY, THEY JUST SEEM LIKE A REGULAR BUTLER AND MAID...

MEANWHILE, HARUHI MADE HERSELF A BOARD GAME BILLIONAIRE ...

THE TWO OF THEM STAYED IN THE KITCHEN, BUSILY WORKING AWAY.

WE WERE GOING TO COME IN THE MORNING, BUT THE TRAINS ARE RUNNING LATE BECAUSE OF SNOW.

HEY, GUYS. IT'S BEEN A WHILE.

GACHA (CLACK)

... LEAVING THE REST OF US BANK-RUPT, WHEN...

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!

YOU'RE FRIENDS OF KOIZUMI-KUN, SO IT'S ALL GOOD. AND ANYWAY!

IT'S AN HONOR TO BE INVITED TO THE TSURUYA FAMILY VILLA.

NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN!

PLEASED TO MEET YOU—MY NAME IS TAMARU. THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE INVITATION.

IT WAS THE TAMARU BROTHERS, WHO WE'D SEEN LAST SUMMER.

ME TOO!

I LOVE STUFF LIKE THIS!

YOU'RE THE ENTER-TAINMENT, RIGHT?

THE CLOCK WOULD SOON STRIKE TWO IN THE AFTER-NOON.

AND HIS YOUNGER BROTHER, YUTAKA-SAN.

KEIICHI TAMARU-SAN, WHOSE FORTUNE FROM BIO-SOMETHING OR OTHER WAS LARGE ENOUGH TO BUY HIMSELF A PRIVATE ISLAND.

WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU, ARAKAWA.

TO THINK WE'D BE IMPOSING ON YOU IN THE WINTER TOO!

WELCOME, HONORED GUESTS.

CHIRA

VERY GOOD, SIR.

OUR LUG-GAGE ...

CHIRA (GLANCE)

WE ATE ON THE TRAIN.

WOULD YOU CARE FOR LUNCH?

WITH APOLOGIES TO THE TAMARU BROTHERS, WHO'VE ONLY JUST ARRIVED.

YEEEAH!!

WELL, THEN, WITH EVERYONE ASSEMBLED ...

...LET US BEGIN THE GAME.

13:45

YOU NEED NOT CONSIDER MOTIVE.

THERE ARE NO PLANS FOR THIS TO BECOME A SERIAL MURDER CASE. ALSO, THERE IS ONLY ONE MURDERER.

LET ME STATE AGAIN THAT THE ONLY VICTIM WILL BE KEIICHI.

OK.

I WOULD ASK THAT STARTING NOW— FROM 2 P.M. TO 3 P.M...

...NO ONE OTHER THAN ARAKAWA AND MORI MAY LEAVE THIS COMMON AREA.

SO EXCITING!

CONSIDER THIS A GAME OF PURE DEDUCTION.

AND ONE MORE THING ...

ふぅ…
KOHON (COUGH)

EVERY-ONE UNDER-STAND?

WELL, THEN.

YES. I CAN SHOW YOU THE WAY.

PO

PA (FWIP)

MY ROOM IN THE SMALL BUILDING IS A BIT REMOVED FROM THE MAIN HOUSE, CORRECT?

...AND I'VE GOT A TOUCH OF A COLD, SO MY VOICE IS A BIT OFF...

I AWOKE RATHER EARLY TODAY...

I THINK I'LL TAKE A BIT OF A NAP.

...DON'T FORGET! GOT THAT? 4:30!

EVEN FOR AN ACT, THIS IS ALL WAY TOO FAKE.

AAH!

JUST COME AND WAKE ME UP AROUND 4:30!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. IT'S NOT THAT BAD!

NOW THAT YOU MEN-TION IT!

KEIICHI-SAN, AREN'T YOU ALLERGIC TO CATS?

MAYBE.

THERE'S A LITTLE PLACE, SEPARATE FROM THIS HOUSE.

YOU DIDN'T SEE IT?

WAIT A SEC, AN EXTERNAL BUILDING?

WAS THERE ONE?

IF YOU WON'T TELL US ABOUT IT...WE'LL ALL HAVE TO GO TAKE A LOOK!

IT'S NOT LIKE HE WAS HIDING ANYTHING.

YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT!

I DID NOT!

NO FAIR HIDING CLUES!

GOTTA PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF THE CONTES-TANTS!

THAT'S THE WAY!!

RIGHTS?

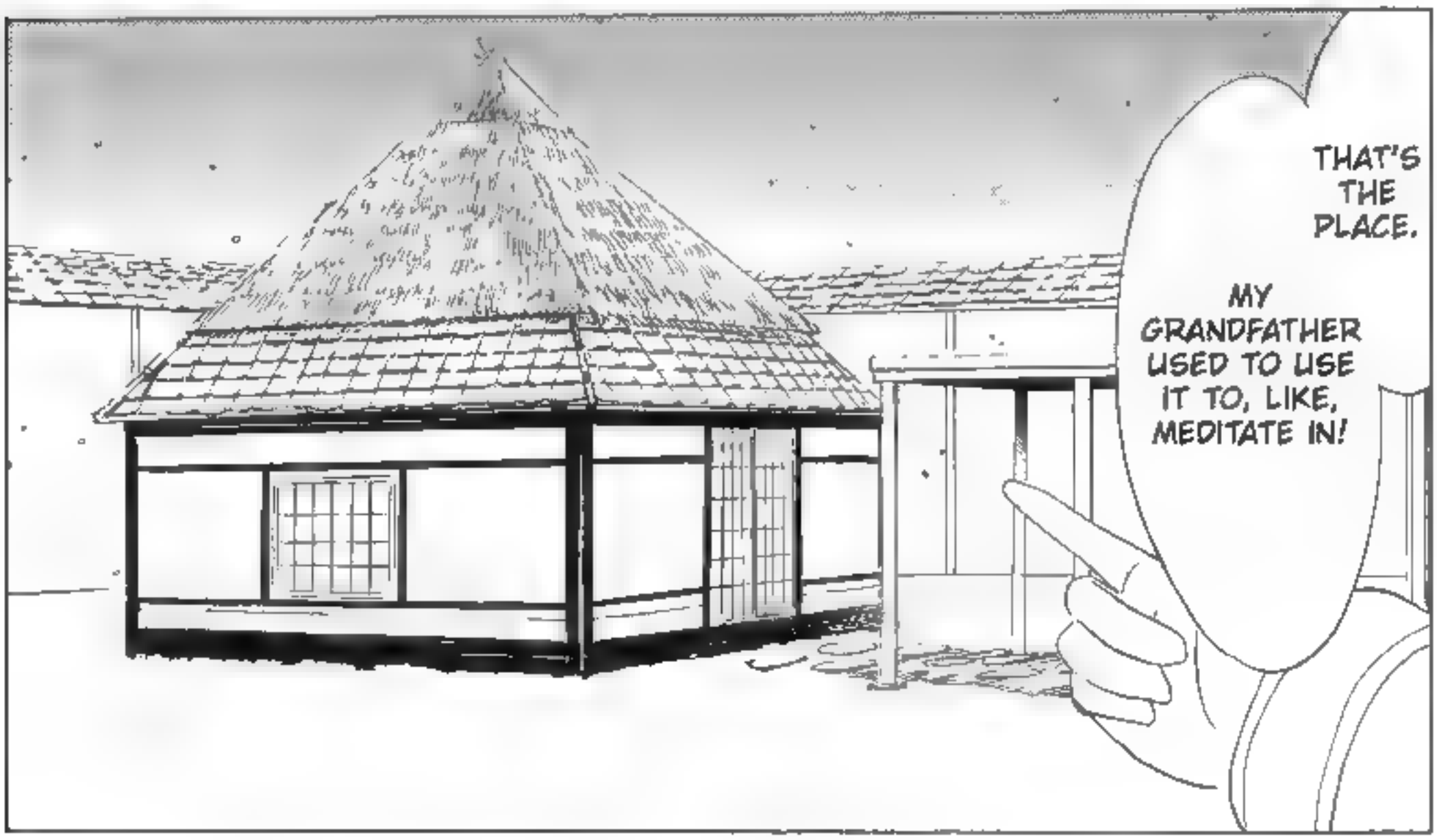
VERY WELL. THERE'S NO HARM IN DOING THAT MUCH.

YOU WERE GOING TO SEE IT LATER ANYWAY ...

THIS WAY!

I DON'T THINK THESE TWO ARE GONNA BE MUCH USE AS DETEC-TIVES...
WHAT'RE WE DOIN'? WHAT'RE WE DOIN'?

WHAT LOVELY SNOW!


THAT'S THE PLACE.
MY GRANDFATHER USED TO USE IT TO, LIKE, MEDITATE IN!

TA CDASH

HE HATED PEOPLE, SEE.

SO HE'D SHUT HIMSELF UP IN HERE TO GET AWAY FROM THE NOISE IN THE MAIN HOUSE— WHOOPS!

WAIT, SHAMI!

PIKIIN (TIIING)

I TRIED TO NOTICE EVERY LITTLE DETAIL.

OH?

A PATH LED FROM THE MAIN HOUSE TO THE GARDEN SHACK.

BUT THERE WERE NO WALLS, AND IT WAS EXPOSED FROM THE SIDE.

THAT'S WHAT'S IN THE SCRIPT.

ARE YOU SURE?

YES.

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR KEIICHI-SAN, HE IS IN THE SHACK.

IS SOME-THING THE MATTER?

AND IT'S REALLY COLD OUT HERE.

DOESN'T SEEM LIKE THERE'S ANY POINT IN DOUBTING IT...

IT WAS GOING TO BE TWO O'CLOCK SOON ENOUGH.

I WASN'T SHAMISEN, AND EVEN I WANTED TO GET BACK TO WHERE THE HEATING WORKED.

I'LL SAY THIS ONE MORE TIME.

PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE THIS AREA UNTIL AFTER THREE.

WHAT, ARE THERE EVEN MORE GAMES?

IF YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST, PLEASE TELL ME.

I MADE THEM ALL BY HAND, SO YOU GUYS BETTER BE GRATE-FUL!

IT'S THE SOS BRIGADE SPECIAL EDITION OF FUKU-WARAI!*

YES. IN THE MEAN-TIME, DO TRY TO HAVE FUN WITH THIS.

THAT'S MY CUE!

WHEN THE FACES ARE DONE, WE'RE GONNA HANG THEM ON THE CLUBROOM WALL, SO BE SERIOUS.

WAAH

WE'RE GONNA PLAY WITH OUR OWN FACES.

I MUST SAY SHE HAS A CERTAIN ARTISTIC FLAIR.

ME, ME!

OKAY, WHO'S GOING FIRST?

WHERE'D SHE FIND THE ENERGY TO DO THIS...?

I THOUGHT HE WAS SITTING ON THE PILLOW IN FRONT OF THE HEATING VENT, BUT...

...WHERE DID SHAMISEN GO?

HEY, WAIT ...

*FUKUWARAI IS A GAME SIMILAR TO PIN THE TAIL ON THE DONKEY IN WHICH PLAYERS BLINDLY PLACE FACIAL FEATURES ON A BLANK FACE.

THE ROOM WAS LIVELY, BUT I COULDN'T LAUGH SINCE I KNEW I'D HAVE TO GO TOO.

?

EVEN TSURUYA DIDN'T HAVE X-RAY VISION.

EXCUSE ME FOR A MOMENT.

THREE MINUTES LATER...

NEXT IT'S KYON'S TURN!

AH...

I'LL LEAVE SUZUMIYA-SAN AND THE OTHERS IN YOUR HANDS.

I NEED TO GO SPEAK TO ARAKAWA ABOUT TOMORROW'S ARRANGE-MENTS.

KYON'S IS THE BEST!

AH HA HA!

PARDON MY ABSENCE.

DO WHATEVER YOU WANT.

WE'VE GOTTA KEEP THIS FOREVER!

CHECK IT OUT!

HOW DID IT GO?

HE WAS JUST FOLLOWING MORI-SAN AROUND IN THE KITCHEN.

HEY, IT'S KOIZUMI AND SHAMISEN.

SFX: HI-HA-HOO-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-AH-HII! BAN (SLAP) BAN BAN BAN

WELL, EVERYONE— IT WILL SOON BE THREE O'CLOCK.

TSURUYA-SAN, YOU'RE LAUGHING A LITTLE TOO MUCH...

WELL... IT'S NOT GOOD TO BE TOO SERIOUS ABOUT THESE THINGS.

WHEN WILL THE MURDER HAPPEN?

BANANA HELL

SLIP (ETC.) BACK 4 SPACES.

EAT TOO MANY BANANAS. GET DIZZY. FORWARD 2 SPACES.

SLIP ON A (ETC.) BACK 3 SPACES.

KYON ONLY: 30 PUSH-UPS.

SLIP ON A BANANA. BACK 2 SPACES.

SLIP ON A BANANA. KYON GOES BACK 1 SPACE.

DO AN IMPRESSION OF SOMEONE.

READY. SET..

START!!

EVERYBODY ELSE DOES AN IMPRESSION OF YOU.

TREAT EVERYBODY TO SOMETHING SWEET

CONFESS YOUR MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT. HEE-HEE...

SAY AT LEAST FIVE NICE THINGS TO THE BRIGADE CHIEF.

SUZU-MIYA-SAN AND I MADE IT.

YAAR!

EACH SPACE WAS WRITTEN BY HAND!

IS IT KIND OF MALICIOUS, OR AM I JUST IMAGINING THINGS?

LOOP HELL

KYON ONLY: 50 SIT-UPS.

TRUTH! ANSWER EVERYBODY'S QUESTIONS HONESTLY. (EVERYBODY HAS TO ASK SUPER EMBARRASSING QUESTIONS.)

JUST ENJOY THIS UNTIL FOUR O'CLOCK.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT

THE SOS BRIGADE GAME OF LIFE!

IMMEDIATELY GO BUY A CAN OF SODA. YOU HAVE ONE MINUTE!

GOAL!!

YOU MADE IT!

KYON ONLY: 100 SQUATS.

BACK 5 SPACES.

BACK 4 SPACES.

BACK 3 SPACES.

BACK 2 SPACES.

BACK 1 SPACE.

KYON ONLY: 20 OBLIQUE KNEE-UPS, 5 LEG RAISES, 10 TRICEPS ROWS (EACH SIDE), 10 KNEE-UPS (EACH SIDE), 10 NARROW-STANCE PUSH-UPS (HAH!)

IF POSSIBLE, PLEASE REFRAIN FROM GOING OUTSIDE...

OF COURSE, THAT ONLY APPLIES IF YOU ARE NOT THE MURDERER.

YOU ARE NOW FREE TO MOVE ABOUT.

PLEASE ASSEMBLE BACK HERE BY 4:30.

YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE, EVERYBODY. IT IS NOW FOUR O'CLOCK.

WELL, I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

DON'T WORRY, I'LL BE BACK IN FIVE MINUTES.

I NEED TO TIDY UP MY LUGGAGE.

WELL, THEN, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME.

SFX: FUWAAN (SOB)

MIKURU-CHAN, GO GET SOME TEA FROM THE KITCHEN!

NOBODY WANTS TO BE SUSPECTED OF BEING THE KILLER.

IF WE MOVE AROUND NOW, WE'RE PLAYING RIGHT INTO THEIR HANDS.

KEIICHI-SAN IS NOT ANSWERING THE DOOR.

EXCUSE ME.

HALF AN HOUR LATER.

GATAN (CLATTER)

IT'S TIME!

WE'LL NEED TO CHECK THE SCENE OF THE CRIME.

AND THE DOOR HAS BEEN LOCKED.

I CHECKED THE SHACK, BUT THERE IS NO RESPONSE.

I WANNA RING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH SOME BRIL-LIANT DETEC-TIVE WORK!

TA (DASH)

GEEZ, HERE WE GO AGAIN...

WHAT'S THE SITUA-TION?

INCI-DENTALLY, THERE ARE NO DUPLICATE KEYS.

AND THE KEY IS IN THE ROOM WITH KEIICHI-SAMA.

THE DOOR IS LOCKED FROM THE INSIDE.

IT IS JUST AS MORI SAID.

CHA (CLICK)

THIS KEY DOES NOT REALLY EXIST. PLEASE ACT AS THOUGH THAT WERE TRUE.

ARA-KAWA-SAN, THE KEY.

SIR.

SFX: JARA (CLINK)

HOW-EVER, THERE IS NO NEED TO BREAK DOWN THE DOOR.

SIMPLY ACTING AS THOUGH THERE ARE NO DUPLICATES WILL SUFFICE.

WH-
WHAT

...WHAT
HAPPENED
HERE!?

WHO KILLED YOU?

I CAN'T SAY.

DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES.

HI THERE.

I'VE BEEN KILLED AGAIN.

TAKE A GOOD LOOK AROUND THE ROOM.

茶番劇

EVERY-ONE, PLEASE ...

SCROLL: THE TEA IN THE CAPITAL HAS A REFRESHING FRAGRANCE.

THE ROOM KEY WAS HERE.... OBVIOUSLY, KEIICHI-SAN BROUGHT IT IN WITH HIM.

THE VICTIM WAS LYING NEXT TO THE FUTON. IN HIS CHEST WAS THE KNIFE WE BELIEVE TO HAVE BEEN THE MURDER WEAPON.

KARARA (RATTLE)

ALTHOUGH THEY ARE CLOSED, THEY ARE NOT LOCKED.

AND OUTSIDE ...

THE ESCAPE ROUTE WAS THE WINDOW.

WHICH MEANS THE KILLER DID NOT LEAVE THROUGH THE DOOR.

I SEE— THIS IS GETTING REALLY MYSTERY-LIKE!

...IS SNOW!

AT THIS RATE, THE PRINTS WOULDN'T HAVE DISAP-PEARED IN LESS THAN THIRTY MINUTES.

NYAAAN (MEOOW)

THAT THE KILLER'S FOOT-PRINTS HAVE BEEN COVERED BY THE FALLING SNOW.

BUT I DIDN'T SEE ANY FOOT-PRINTS.

WHICH MEANS ...

YOU'VE FOUND SHAMI-SEN, I SEE.

LET US RETURN TO THE COMMON ROOM AND CONFER.

SHAMI-SEN?

BOARD: 2:00 - KEIICHI-SAN GOES TO ROOM, 4:30 - BODY DISCOVERED

WE FOUND HIM AS A CORPSE, JUST A MOMENT AGO...

KEIICHI-SAN WENT TO HIS ROOM AT TWO O'CLOCK.

AND THEN THERE'S SHAMISEN.

...AT 4:30.

2:00 主一

2

4:30 遺!

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I HADN'T SEEN SHAMISEN FOR ABOUT THREE HOURS.

WAS HE HERE?

SO WE CAN BE SURE THE CRIME WAS COMMITTED SOMETIME DURING THOSE TWO AND A HALF HOURS.

I THINK HE WAS THERE WHEN WE STARTED THE BOARD GAME.

WITNESS 3

WHAT ABOUT WHEN WE WERE PLAYING THE BOARD GAME?

HMM!

WITNESS 2

I FEEL LIKE I SAW HIM WHEN WE PLAYED FUKU-WARAI ...

WITNESS 1

SO SHAMISEN DOESN'T HAVE AN ALIBI BETWEEN THREE AND FOUR...?

WHICH WAS JUST THREE O'CLOCK.

EITHER KEIICHI-SAN, OR THE KILLER.

IT IS NATURAL TO ASSUME SOMEONE ELSE TOOK HIM THERE.

CAN'T BE RIGHT.

WHY WOULD HE GO OFF TO THAT FREEZING SHACK OF HIS OWN FREE WILL?

WHICH MEANS THE PERSON WHO TOOK THE CAT MUST BE THE KILLER.

YES.

KEIICHI-SAN SAID HE WAS ALLERGIC TO CATS, RIGHT?

THAT MEANS THE KILLER LEFT THE SHACK NO LATER THAN FOUR.

IF IT TAKES AT LEAST THIRTY MINUTES FOR THE SNOW TO COVER THE FOOT-PRINTS...

SHAMI-SEN WAS HERE UNTIL THREE...

BUT HIS *MOVE-MENTS* AFTER THAT ARE UNKNOWN ...

EVERY-BODY PLAYED THE BOARD GAME, RIGHT?

BUT THAT'S WEIRD TOO.

WHICH MEANS KEIICHI WAS KILLED SOMETIME BETWEEN THREE AND FOUR.

WHICH PROVES EVERY-BODY'S ALIBI...

BOARD: 2:00 - KEIICHI-SAN GOES TO ROOM
4:30 - BODY DISCOVERED

SO NOW THE GAME TRULY BEGINS.

INDEED.

2:00 主一
~
4:0 遺

WHO CAN VOUCH FOR THAT?

I HAVE BEEN IN THE KITCHEN SINCE TWO O'CLOCK.

ARA-KAWA-SAN...

...LET'S HEAR YOUR ALIBI.

YOU COULD BE HIS ACCOM-PLICE!

...I WAS WITH ARAKAWA-SAN UNTIL HE WENT TO WAKE KEIICHI-SAN AT 4:30.

IF I MAY...

... NEITHER OF THESE TWO IS THE KILLER.

AND I'LL JUST SAY THIS AS THE GAME MASTER ...

THAT IS NOT THE CASE.

AS I SAID IN THE BEGIN-NING, THERE IS ONLY ONE CULPRIT.

EVERY-BODY'S ALIBI IS PER-FECT!

THEN WHO COULD IT BE?

THERE'D BE NO GAME, OTHER-WISE.

THAT IS WHAT YOU MUST DISCOVER.

FAKE

BAN CWHAM

NOW THIS IS THE KIND OF TOUGH CASE I WANTED!

TIME FOR THE BRILLIANT DETECTIVES TO SPRING INTO ACTION!

BAG: DETECTIVE COSTUME SET

WHERE DID THE CAT GO? 1 : END

WHERE DID THE CAT GO? II

NOW THIS IS THE KIND OF TOUGH CASE I WANTED!

EVENING AP-PROACHED ON THE LAST DAY OF THE YEAR.

BUT UNTIL WE SOLVED THE MYSTERY, WE COULDN'T RING IN THE NEW YEAR.

BAN (BAM)

TIME FOR THE BRILLIANT DETECTIVES TO SPRING INTO ACTION!

WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS.

THE FIRST THING WE HAVE TO CONSIDER IS...

...WHY DID THE KILLER NEED SHAMI-SEN?

TRUE. THE KILLER NEEDED SHAMISEN TO BE THERE FOR SOME REASON.

WHAT WAS THE KILLER DOING THAT THEY NEEDED A CAT FOR?

OTHER-WISE WHAT'S THE POINT?

YOU THINK?

KITTY, DINNER!

A LOCKED ROOM TRICK?

USING SNOW TO IMPOSE A TIME LIMIT...

YEAH?

KITTY ... KITTY ...

ARE YOU ONTO SOME-THING?

HHHHHH

SHAMI-SEN'S ALIBI IS THE KEY.

IF ONLY HE HADN'T SHOWN HIMSELF THE WHOLE TIME...

SHAMI-SEN'S BEING USED TO TRICK US!

PAKOON (KAPOW)

NO! A TRICK! AN ALIBI TRICK!

BROTHER!

COD SHOWS.

KYON, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORD "ALIBI"?

UM, I GUESS... ...THE LAST TIME I SAW HIM WAS ABOUT THREE.

LOOK ... ...WHEN DOES SHAMI-SEN'S ALIBI GET VAGUE?

BEFORE THREE?

UH, I GUESS ...

DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO THINK BACK?

THINK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED EARLIER.

FORGET ABOUT THAT.

ISN'T THAT RIGHT, MORI-SAN?

THE KITCHEN.

WHERE DID YOU BRING HIM FROM?

YES.

JUST A BIT PAST 2:30.

KOI-ZUMI ...

...WHEN WAS IT THAT YOU CARRIED THE CAT BACK TO THE COMMON AREA?

...

...BUT HE ONLY BECAME MORE PERSIS-TENT.

I GAVE IN AND LET HIM HAVE SOME TABLE SCRAPS ...

AS I WAS TIDY-ING UP, THE CAT CAME IN AND STARTED SLINKING AROUND MY FEET.

SO WHEN KOIZUMI-SAMA PASSED THROUGH, HE TOOK THE CAT WITH HIM.

WHEN I RETURNED FROM THE SHACK, HE WAS GROOMING HIMSELF IN THE KITCHEN.

ABOUT TWO.

AND WHEN DID SHAMI-SEN JOIN YOU?

I SUP-POSE... IT WAS ABOUT THAT TIME, YES.

AND THAT WAS AT 2:30?

SHAMISEN HAD ROAMED AROUND THE VILLA AFTER ESCAPING MY YOUNGER SISTER'S CLUTCHES...

SO THAT MUCH MATCHES UP.

SO HE HAS AN ALIBI FROM TWO TO THREE.

THAT'S WHERE THE TRICK IS.

...WHERE HE COM-MENCED NAPPING IN FRONT OF THE HEATING VENT.

...THEN GONE TO BEG FOOD IN THE KITCHEN, AND AROUND 2:30 WAS BROUGHT BACK HERE BY KOIZUMI...

KURA (DIZZY)

ESPE-CIALLY AFTER THREE ...

WHEN DID SHAMISEN FALL INTO THE KILLER'S HANDS, AND WHAT DID HE SEE...?

THAT HOUR IS ALL WE'RE SURE OF. THE REST IS STILL VAGUE.

THERE'S EVIDENCE OF HIS PRESENCE FOR THAT HOUR.

DON'T SOUND SO HIGH-AND-MIGHTY.

GIVE US A HINT.

I SEE!

RIGHT, I'VE GOT IT!

KA (FLASH)

...I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THE FIRST TO NOTICE WOULD BE YOU OR YOUR SISTER.

WELL, I SUP-POSE ...

I SEE!

OH!

HUH!?

THE KITTY'S ALIBI IS THE SAME AS THE KILLER'S!

HARU-NYAN, THAT'S IT!

HERE WITH EVERYBODY ELSE!

I NEED TO STRETCH!

RIGHT, OF COURSE!

THAT'S WHY THE CAT HAD TO BE HERE!

BE-CAUSE OTHER-WISE, THE KILLER'S OWN ALIBI WOULD BE BLOWN!

FOR THAT HOUR, THE CAT HAD TO BE SOME-WHERE EVERYONE COULD SEE IT.

THAT'S IT! NICE ONE!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

...FROM BETWEEN 2:30 TO 4:00.

WHICH PUSHES THE TIME OF THE MURDER FORWARD HALF AN HOUR...

HE HAS TWO HOURS WITHOUT AN ALIBI, NOT JUST AN HOUR AND A HALF!

SHAMI DIDN'T GO MISS-ING AT 3:00, BUT 2:30!

SFX: KUTAKATSU (CHATTER) KUTAKATSU KUTAKATSU

KUTAKATSU KUTAKATSU

RIGHT!

THE TRUE CRIME HAP-PENED AT 2:30!

...WHO HAD SOME-THING TO GAIN?

YOU'RE SO SLOW, KYON. THINK ABOUT IT THIS WAY...

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE REST OF US?

SORRY

SEEMS LIKE THE TWO OF THEM ARE CLOSING IN ON THE TRUTH.

SHAMISEN WAS TAKEN BY THE KILLER.

WHICH MEANT THEY NEEDED TO DO THAT.

UH, NOBODY?

IT'S NOT NO-BODY!

AT LEAST, NOT ME

WHO CARES ABOUT YOU?

WHO HAS SOME-THING TO GAIN FROM THE CAT BEING M.I.A. FROM THREE TO FOUR ...?

BOARD: CAT TAKEN FROM, FROM 2:30 TO 4:00

THE KILLER TOOK SHAMISEN TO THE SHACK, SO...

KYU (SQUEAK)

OKAY, LET'S BREAK THIS DOWN.

THE KILLER NEEDS US TO BE MISTAKEN ...

... ABOUT THE TIME FOR WHICH SHAMI-SEN HAS NO ALIBI.

THAT'S THE TRICK!

THAT'S WHAT EVERY-BODY WOULD THINK.

...THE MOMENT WHEN SHAMISEN DISAP-PEARED IS THE TIME OF THE MURDER...

THAT'S IT!

WE DIDN'T LEAVE THE ROOM, RIGHT?

BUT WHAT ABOUT START-ING AT TWO?

EVERYBODY HAS AN ALIBI FROM THREE TO FOUR.

SFX: KUTAKATSU (CHATTER) KUTAKATSU KUTAKATSU KUTAKATSU KUTAKATSU

THIS, PARA-DOXICALLY, PROVES THE KILLER'S ALIBI!

WHICH IS SHAMISEN GOING MISSING FROM THREE TO FOUR.

THE KILLER NEEDED TO PRESERVE THEIR ALIBI BETWEEN TWO AND THREE.

...IS THE TRICK!

TO MAKE US THINK THAT THE KILLER TOOK THE CAT AND WENT TO THE SHACK AFTER THREE...

SORRY. CAN'T HELP YOU

TOO MANY LETTERS.

'COS SHAMI-SEN CAN'T EXIST HERE AND AT THE CRIME SCENE AT THE SAME TIME!

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVERYBODY EXCEPT ONE PERSON!

WHO HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMIT THE MURDER BETWEEN 2:00 AND 4:30?

DON'T YOU SEE? THINK ABOUT IT THIS WAY.

KEIICHI-SAN WAS KILLED BEFORE THREE.

BUT IF WE NARROW IT DOWN TO AFTER THREE O'CLOCK, THAT PERSON ALSO HAS AN ALIBI.

AND THAT'S WHEN SHAMISEN WAS TAKEN TO THE SHACK!

SO WHAT WE'VE GOTTEN WRONG IS THE TIME OF THE CRIME.

DON'T TELL ME HE SPLIT HIMSELF.

AND WHAT ABOUT ASAHINA-SAN SEEING HIM SLEEPING A BIT BEFORE THREE?

WAIT A SEC...

...HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THAT I SAW SHAMISEN AT THREE?

YOU STILL DON'T GET IT?

YOU'RE HOPE-LESS!

LET ME EXPLAIN WHAT THE KILLER DID.

NEITHER MORI NOR ARAKAWA IS THE KILLER, AND WE DON'T HAVE TO DOUBT THEIR TESTIMONY...

...SINCE WE HAVE THE GAME MASTER'S GUARAN-TEE.

APPARENTLY THE ONLY ONES WHO HADN'T FIGURED IT OUT WERE MYSELF, ASAHINA, AND MY SISTER.

THEY THEN LEFT THE CAT IN THE ROOM, LOCKED THE DOOR ...

THEN STABBED KEIICHI-SAN.

...AND TOOK SHAMI-SEN FROM THE KITCHEN.

THE KILLER LEFT THE COMMON AREA SOMETIME BETWEEN TWO AND THREE...

HANG ON.

WHAT ABOUT THE FACT THAT I SAW SHAMI-SEN AT THREE?

WAIT, WAIT, WAIT.

...AND ESCAPED VIA THE WINDOW BACK TO THE MAIN HOUSE.

EMPTY-HANDED, OF COURSE.

?

IT'S THE LOGICAL CONCLU-SION.

THERE'S ONLY ONE KILLER.

!?

THAT WASN'T SHAMISEN!

YOU ARE SO SLOW!

?

BOARD: 1:00 - KEIICHI-SAN GOES TO THE SHACK
(CALICO CAT)
2:00 - LAST CONFIRMATION -> KYON
(UNTIL KEIICH-SAN'S BODY IS DISCOVERED AT 4:30)

SO THAT PERSON IS THE KILLER.

AND THE ONLY TIME THAT KILLER COULD HAVE ACTED ON THEIR OWN WAS DURING A FEW MINUTES AROUND 2:30.

NO MATTER WHAT THEIR ALIBI IS.

MOVING EASILY BETWEEN THE MAIN HOUSE AND THE SHACK WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVERYBODY ELSE, NO MATTER WHAT TIME IT WAS.

DOESN'T MATTER IF IT WAS A DOLL OR A LOOKALIKE.

THE CAT YOU SAW WAS A FAKE!

THAT'S THE ONLY WAY TO DEFEAT THE ALIBI!

BA (FWD)

THE KILLER IS...

I THINK YOU'VE FIGURED IT OUT, SO LET'S JUST SAY IT!

YEAH!

YAAAAAW?!

BAN (WHAM)

ÖI KOIZUMI-KUN!

INDEED.

I WAS THE KILLER.

WHY DIDN'T YOU GIVE US FREE TIME STARTING AT THREE?

THAT WOULD'VE MADE IT TOUGHER.

THAT WOULD HAVE INDEED MADE ASCERTAINING THE KILLER MORE DIFFICULT.

SINCE THE TIME YOU NEEDED TO FOCUS ON WOULD'VE BEEN LESS CLEAR.

I HAD HOPED YOU WOULD TAKE A BIT MORE TIME TO THINK IT THROUGH.

BUT SUZUMIYA-SAN AND TSURUYA-SAN WERE TOO SHARP.

I HAD ARAKAWA BRING IT THERE BEFORE THE GAME BEGAN.

IN MY ROOM.

WE HAD NO IDEA. DID WE?

THEN WHERE IS SHAMI-SEN'S BODY DOUBLE?

YOU'VE FIGURED OUT THE REST.

AFTER THE MURDER, BEFORE RETURNING HERE, I WENT AND GOT THE DOUBLE OUT OF MY ROOM.

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE STORY, I BROUGHT IT MYSELF.

THAT DOESN'T MAKE HIM AN ACCOMPLICE, THOUGH.

?

SU (POINT)

AND WHERE'D THE CAT GO?

...
EVERYBODY'S ATTENTION WAS FOCUSED ON THE GAME, SO I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO HIDE THE CAT.

AFTER I TOOK THE BOARD GAME OUT OF MY BACKPACK ...

KOSO (RUMMAGE)

I'M IMPRESSED YOU COULD FIND A DOUBLE.

ALTHOUGH I GUESS SHE'D HAVE TO BE FEMALE.

SO THAT'S WHY...

...YOU SAID YOU THOUGHT MY SISTER OR I WOULD'VE NOTICED FIRST.

WHOA!

TA (DASH)

WOW!

THEY LOOK JUST THE SAME!

INDEED.

FINDING A SIMILAR CAT WAS THE HARDEST PART OF ALL THIS.

I FINALLY FOUND A STRAY THAT RESEMBLED HIM, BUT STILL HAD TO DYE SOME OF HER FUR.

AND ALSO ...

NYA

NYA

NYA

NYA

NYA (MROW)

LOCATING A NEARLY IDENTICAL CALICO WAS NO EASY TASK.

I NAMED HER SHAMISEN THE SECOND— SHAMITWO, FOR SHORT.

...SHE HAD TO BE TRAINED TO "SIT."

IF SHE'D STARTED MOVING AROUND, THE GAME WOULD'VE BEEN BLOWN.

NOW THEN...

SFX: KOHON (COUGH)

...OUR MYSTERY GAME HAS COME TO AN END.

I TRUST NO ONE WILL MIND ME AWARDING BOTH SUZUMIYA AND TSURUYA THE PRIZE FOR CORRECTLY SOLVING THE MYSTERY.

THIS CONCLUDES THE DAY'S ENTERTAIN-MENT.

I THANK EVERYONE FOR THEIR COOPER-ATION.

PARTICULARLY TSURUYA FOR THE USE OF HER FAMILY'S VILLA...

...KEIICHI TAMARU FOR PLAYING THE ROLE OF THE VICTIM...

...AND EVERY-ONE ELSE.

PACHI (CLAP)

!?

?

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

パチパチパチパチ
PACHI PACHI PACHI PACHI
IT MIGHT BE A PAIN, BUT HE'S EARNED A LITTLE APPLAUSE.
GOOD JOB, KOIZUMI.
BUT SERIOUSLY, YOU COULD'VE GIVEN THE CAT A BETTER NAME.

THE PRIZE WAS A SMALL ELECTRO-PLATED TROPHY.

TROPHY: WHERE DID THE CAT GO?

I GAVE UP AND TOOK A PIC-TURE.

SO, HOW DID YOU LIKE THE GAME?

LATER, MORI-SAN AND ARAKAWA-SAN BROUGHT THE SPECIAL NEW YEAR'S NOODLES.

GARA
GARA
GARA
GARA (CLATTER)
GARA
HARUHI SEEMS HAPPY AND ALL.
WELL, THAT'S WHAT'S IMPORTANT.
WHAT, ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT IT?
IT WAS FINE, RIGHT?

SFX: ZUZUZU (SLURRRP) CHURURURURU (SHLUUURP) ZUZUZUZU CHURU

JURURI (DROOL)
THANKS TO EVERYBODY, I'M FREE NOW.
I'VE BEEN PREOCCUPIED BY THE PLANNING FOR THIS EVER SINCE THE WINTER FIELD TRIP WAS ANNOUNCED.

ZURURURURU (SLURRRP)
IF IT WERE UP TO ME, I'D GET RID OF THE COMMENTATOR ROLE.
I THINK BEING A COMMENTATOR SUITS ME BEST.
I DON'T THINK I'M REALLY CUT OUT TO BE THE KILLER OR MASTER-[redacted] TYPE.
I'M HAPPY TO LEAVE THE DETECTIVE ROLE TO OTHERS TOO.

WE'VE DONE AN ISLAND AND A SNOWY MOUNTAIN, SO NEXT SHOULD BE A WEIRD OLD MANSION!

PEKAN (TING)

WE'RE LEAVING NEXT SUMMER'S EVENT TO YOU TOO!

I KNOW THE PERFECT PLACE!

WOULDN'T AN OLD STONE CASTLE BE PERFECT?

WE COULD GO ABROAD TOO.

MAKE SURE YOU GET YOUR PASS-PORTS READY BY SUMMER!

HEAR THAT, EVERY-BODY?

MY DAD'S FRIEND OWNS A CASTLE OVERSEAS!

IF I DIDN'T DO SOMETHING, WE'D WIND UP OPENING AN OVERSEAS BRANCH.

I REALLY DIDN'T WANT THINGS TO GET TOO OUT OF HAND.

OR SO I TOLD MYSELF, AS ELO-QUENTLY AS I COULD MANAGE.

THIS WAS PROBABLY THE FIRST NEW YEAR'S EVE I'D EVER PASSED WITHOUT A SINGLE GLANCE AT THE TELEVISION.

WE PLAYED ANOTHER ROUND OF HARUHI'S BOARD GAME, THIS TIME INCLUDING MORI AND THE OTHERS.

EVEN-TUALLY THE HOUR GREW LATE.

...THE MOMENT WE'D ALL BEEN WAITING FOR DREW NEAR.

AS THE LUXURIOUS DINNER AND EVENING CONVER-SATION CAME TO AN END...

AT LEAST LET ME EAT SOME RICE CAKE SOUP.

WE GOTTA DO A SHRINE VISIT TOO.

ONCE WE WAKE UP TOMORROW, WE CAN WRITE OUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS AND PLAY HANETSUKI* IN THE SNOW!

*A GAME SIMILAR TO BADMINTON.

...SO IT'D BE A WASTE NOT TO DO EVERYTHING!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

WE'RE LUCKY ENOUGH TO LIVE IN A COUNTRY THAT MIXES UP ALL KINDS OF RELIGIONS...

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

WE'LL DRESS ASAHINA-SAN UP AS A SHRINE MADIEN.

WELL, IN THAT CASE, WHY NOT JUST BUILD A SNOW TEMPLE OUT IN THE YARD AND STICK AN OFFERING BOX IN FRONT OF IT?

御

銭

IDIOT!

IT'S HARD TO GIVE UP ON THE IDEA OF SHRINE MAIDENS, BUT I WANT TO SEE MIKURU IN A FULL KIMONO!

AND YUKI TOO!

AND GO TO EVERY SHRINE AND TEMPLE WE CAN FIND...

LOOK AT THE TIME

WHOOPS.

初春

I COULD MANAGE BEING RESPECT-FUL ONCE A YEAR.

AND THE YEAR WAS ALMOST OVER.

WE ALL SAT IN A CIRCLE, KNEEL-ING DOWN IN THE TRADI-TIONAL WAY.

IT'S TIME, EVERY-BODY.

AND AT THIS MOMENT, THERE WAS NO NEED TO FROWN, ANYWAY.

I COULDN'T THINK OF A REASON TO COMPLAIN.

賀正

BANNER: HAPPY NEW YEAR

AND I FELT A DARK PREMONITION ABOUT THE SCHEDULE THAT AWAITED ME OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

WE EXCHANGED THE SAME STANDARD PHRASE WE DO EVERY NEW YEAR.

WHERE DID THE CAT GO? II : END

NOBI
NOBI
NOBI
(STRETCH)

AFTER THE COMMERCIAL, A SPECIAL SURPRISE!

IN OTHER WORDS, I'M AS LAZY AS I CAN POSSIBLY BE.

HMM.

YOU KNOW THIS ONE?

I MAKE IT A POINT TO CELEBRATE NEW YEAR'S EVE AND NEW YEAR'S DAY IN THE PROPER JAPANESE TRADITION.

BAA (FWAP)

GOOD MORNING, EVERYBODY! AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

BUT THIS YEAR, I'M WITH HER, WHICH MEANS THERE'LL BE NONE OF THAT.

WE'RE GONNA SEIZE THE YEAR!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

WITH THE DAWN OF A NEW YEAR, JUST AS MY MOOD WAS ABOUT TO TAKE A TURN FOR THE BETTER...

...I FOUND MYSELF ONCE AGAIN IN ONE OF TSURUYA-SAN'S VILLAS.

ON THE GROUNDS THERE WAS A SMALL SHRINE.

QUIET!

I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY'VE EVEN GOT A SHRINE...

WELL, I GUESS IT'S NICE TO BE ABLE TO DO THE FIRST SHRINE VISIT OF THE YEAR WHILE WE'RE OUT HERE.

OH, SURE, NOW SHE'S QUIET.

STUFF LIKE THIS WAS THE ONLY THING HE TOOK SERI-OUSLY.

MY CRAZY GRANDDAD THAT I TOLD YOU ABOUT EARLIER BUILT THIS TOO.

THIS IS JUST PLAYING AROUND!

THE YEAR'S FIRST SHRINE VISIT IS ALL ABOUT GETTING SMUSHED IN A GIANT CROWD.

ZURAA (SHWAA)

SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING.

SFX: MO (NOM) MO MO MO MO

PLEASE HELP YOURSELF TO SECONDS.

I-IT'S-AMAZING-!

WHOAH!

もぐもぐもぐもぐ

WE'VE HAD A FULL COURSE OF ALL THE TRADI-TIONAL NEW YEAR'S FOOD.

IS THIS THE KIND OF THING THAT PEOPLE WEALTHY ENOUGH TO HAVE A MAID ENJOY EVERY DAY?

AND TOMOR-ROW IT WOULD BE OVER.

THIS WOULD BE THE LAST DAY WE COULD REALLY ENJOY.

FOUND A NICE 'CHAIR TO SIT DOWN IN...

SO, THIS WINTER TRIP BEGAN WITH THAT CRAZY ILLUSORY MANSION, THEN MOVED INTO KOIZUMI'S LITTLE PLAY.

WE DON'T WANT TO LET THIS ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME NEW YEAR'S DAY GET AWAY FROM US!

NI (GRIND)

FIRST WE'LL DO KITE-FLYING.

THEN HANE-TSUKI.

WE ALREADY PLAYED FUKUWA-RAI...

I'D NEVER THOUGHT FOR A SECOND IT WOULD BE A RELAXING HOLIDAY.

OH! YEAH!

FULL SPEED AHEAD FOR FUN!

KITE: SOS BRIGADE

OKAY, DOWN YOU GO!

WAAAH...

ZASHAA (SWOOSH)

WAAAH...

FIRST UP WAS KITE-FLYING.

THIS IS QUITE LUXURIOUS AMUSE-MENT.

TSURUYA-SAN HERSELF TOOK CARE OF MY SISTER AND THE CAT (WELL, CATS).

THEN SOME RELAXED SKIING...

...AS THIS WAS THE PRIVATE SKI AREA OF THE TSURUYA FAMILY.

WE SERI-OUSLY COULD NOT THANK HER ENOUGH.

IT WAS PRETTY HARD FINDING A PRINTER THAT COULD PRINT IT OUT THAT BIG!

IN THE END, WE WOUND UP HAVING TO GET THE COMPUTER CLUB TO HELP.

THAT'S THE SPECIAL SOS BRIGADE ...

...LOGO-BEARING KITE FOR YA!

HM?

WHEE...

I'LL USE WHATEVER I GOTTA USE!

YOU WENT TO THOSE GUYS AGAIN?

HEY NOW.

THE LINE BROKE.

HUH?

AF-TER THAT KITE!

BAN (WHAM)

YOU GUYS! WHAT'RE YOU JUST STAND-ING THERE FOR!?

GO, GO!!

IT'D BE PATHETIC IF WE LOST IT ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE YEAR!

I TOLD YOU, IT'S THE OFFICIAL SOS BRIGADE KITE!

ZASHA (FWISH)

SHE'S TOO PUSHY...

YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME... IT'S TOO FAR AWAY!

THAT WAS LUCKY.

OR SO I THOUGHT.

YEAH...

?

KYA-AAA-AAH!

FORTUNATELY, IT WAS HEADED TOWARD THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN.

IF WE JUST SKIED DOWN AFTER IT...

AH WA WA WA...

ASAHINA-SAN?

GASA (RUSTLE)

...A WOLF!?

ASA-
HINA-
SAN...

UM, WHAT SHOULD I DO? YELL? RUN?

AUAA (SHRIEK)

MAYBE PLAY DEAD?

JUST CALM DOWN!

IT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ATTACK-ING.

...I THINK IT'S OKAY.

WHAT'S IT DOING?

HM?

SURE LOOKS THAT WAY...

DOES IT WANT US TO FOLLOW IT, KYON?

ZA

I MEAN ...

ZA

CAN'T BE HELPED.

ZA

ZA (CRUNCH)

HEY, IT SAYS NO TRES-PASSING THAT WAY.

ZA

ZASHA (SHUFF)

IT REALLY WAS LIKE WE WERE BEING LED SOME-WHERE.

I COULD UNDER-STAND WHY SHE WAS TONGUE-TIED.

HUH...?

...ABOUT THE WOLF'S FACE.

WHEN I THOUGHT ABOUT IT, THERE WAS SOMETHING VERY INTELLIGENT ...

...BUT WHAT WAS THIS STRANGE FEELING I HAD...?

A SHRINE ...?

IT WAS WEIRD ENOUGH THAT THERE WAS A SHRINE HIDDEN IN THE SKI AREA...

IT MADE ME WANT TO PUT MY HANDS TOGETHER IN A RESPECT-FUL PRAYER.

I WAS AMAZED WE WERE EVEN HERE.

THERE WASN'T ANY SIGN OF HUMAN ACTIVITY ANY-WHERE.

...HN?

IT'S A PUP.

KIRA (SPARKLE)

KURURU (NRRRR)

I-IT'S SO CUTE!

A WOUND ...?

SURELY IT'S NOT ASKING US TO HELP?

KUUUN (WHINE)

YEAH, AND THE KITE.

SO WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO WITH THIS POOR GUY...

WHADDYA MEAN, "WHAT"?

WE'RE GONNA HELP HIM!

THIS KIND OF UNNATURAL OCCUR-RENCE WAS ALMOST ALWAYS A BAD OMEN.

...THAT'S QUITE A COINCI-DENCE.

NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I...

ARE YOU SAYING WE SHOULD JUST LEAVE HIM HERE?

MAYBE WE SHOULD CALL A VET...

IF WE GET HIM TO THE VILLA, WE CAN DO SOMETHING FOR HIM THERE.

...BUT JUST AS AN... ANIMAL...

... MEANT ...

...NOT WHAT I...

THERE'S BLOOD ...

TH-THE POOR BABY...

LET'S TIE IT WITH A HANKER-CHIEF FOR THE TIME BEING...

IF YOU'VE GOT A WAY I COULD'VE ARGUED AGAINST THAT OVER-WHELMING RHETORIC, I'D LIKE TO HEAR IT.

LOOK.

IT'S SEEING US OFF.

WE'LL BE BACK SOON, DON'T WORRY!

HEY, SO, ABOUT THAT WOLF...

WHAT WAS IT?

SHAAA

WHOOPS. HERE WE GO.

SHAAA

IT MIGHT JUST HAVE BEEN A WOLF PUP, BUT IT WAS HEAVY.

STILL, I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO SEE THIS PATH THROUGH.

SHAAA (SHHHK)

STEP

WHETHER WE WERE BEING LED BY A KITE OR BY A WOLF...

I'D HAVE BEEN LYING IF I SAID I DIDN'T FEEL ANY-THING.

IN ANY CASE, ISN'T THIS WHOLE SITUATION A BIT STRANGE?

WHAT, INDEED.

I FELT SOME-THING THE MOMENT I SAW IT, BUT...

YOU REMEMBER THE INCIDENT WITH THE CAVE CRICKET, CORRECT?

THE PROBLEM IS THIS MARK.

WE'D GOTTEN INTO THAT MESS TRYING TO HELP KIMIDORI-SAN OUT.

HE WAS SURE DRAGGING OUT AN OLD STORY.

LOOK. LOOK!

BUT I SAID NOTHING ABOUT THE DANGER OF REPRO-DUCING THE MARK...

BY THE TIME I REALIZED, HARUHI HAD ALREADY GONE TO THE COMPUTER CLUB AND HAD IT PRINTED.

I MUST APOLO-GIZE.

ALTHOUGH THIS MARK— CALL IT A MAGIC CIRCLE...

...OR WHATEVER YOU WILL, WAS SEALED AWAY...

I SUPPOSE IT'S NOT SURPRISING THAT IT STILL SEEMS TO POSSESS SOME STRANGE GRAVITY.

EVIDENTLY A POWER TOTALLY BEYOND THE COMPRE-HENSION OF AN ORDINARY HUMAN LIKE ME LAY WITHIN THE SYMBOL.

...EVEN THOUGH IT HAD BEEN RETOUCHED AND SEALED AWAY AFTER THE CAVE CRICKET INCIDENT.

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT...?

I DON'T WANT TO THINK THE LITTLE GUY IN MY ARMS COULD BE THE BEGINNING OF ANOTHER INCIDENT, BUT...

THE ESCAPED KITE, THE WOLF, THE SHRINE... THE STORY SEEMS TOO PERFECT.

WE'RE BACK...

WELL, ANYWAY, C'MON IN!

EEK, WHO DO YOU HAVE THERE?

CHIRRUP!

WE FOUND HIM AT A SHRINE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SKI SLOPE.

WELCOME BACK! THAT WAS QUICK.

WAIT, WHICH SHRINE ...?

THANK GODDNESS !

WHEW ...

IT'S SUPER TRENDY THESE DAYS!

DO YOU REALLY THINK ASAHINA-SAN COULD MANAGE THAT?

NO WAY

ARAKAWA-SAN SAID HE'D ADMINISTER SOME BASIC TREATMENT.

WILL IT BE OKAY?

IT WOULD'VE BEEN FUN TO DO THE FIRST SHRINE VISIT OF THE YEAR ON THE SLOPES!

GET ALL DOLLED UP AND SKI!

IT'S PRETTY NIFTY THERE'S A SHRINE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SKI SLOPE!

YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME ABOUT IT!

EXCUSE ME, HERE WE ARE...

KACHA (CLACK)

I MIGHT'VE HEARD SOMETHING ABOUT THAT, THOUGH... I'LL ASK ABOUT IT.

WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT THE WHOLE SKI AREA.

OOH!

I'M AFRAID IT'S VERY RUDI-MENTARY, BUT...

...IT SEEMED TO BE A GUNSHOT WOUND.

I'LL STAY BEHIND AND WATCH OVER HIM.

THIS IS ONLY A STOPGAP TREATMENT. IT WOULD BE BEST TO OBSERVE HIM FOR AT LEAST THREE DAYS...

HUN-TERS?

HE MAY HAVE BEEN SHOT WITH A HUNTING RIFLE.

HUNTING, ON THIS MOUN-TAIN? UNSCRU-PULOUS CURS!

OH!

WELL, LOOKS LIKE THINGS ARE GOING TO WORK OUT OKAY.

MAN, TO THINK EVEN VET CARE IS NO BIG DEAL...

HEAR THAT? YOU JUST REST UP HERE, PAL!

!

AH!

TON (TUP)

WOLFIE!

HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN SMALL, BUT THAT'S WILDLIFE FOR YOU.

I GUESS HE DIDN'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED ANY FURTHER.

TOUGH LITTLE GUY.

THAT'S HOW TO START THE NEW YEAR OFF!

WHAT'S UP?

IT'S BEEN BOTHERING ME FOR A WHILE...

THAT'S THE FIRST TIME THAT'S HAPPENED!

I MEAN, I'VE SEEN TANUKI AROUND, BUT...

I DUNNO ABOUT A SKI AREA WHERE WOLVES SHOW UP LIKE THAT, THOUGH!

PHONE: JAPANESE WOLF

WHAT ...!?

IN-DEED

IT'S AN EXTINCT SPECIES.

ニホンオオカミ

THAT WOLF... ACCORDING TO THIS...

KEEP IT A SECRET FROM HARUHI.

WHAT SHALL WE DO?

THERE AREN'T ANY HUNTERS AROUND HERE EITHER, CORRECT?

I THOUGHT IT WAS STRANGE.

THIS IS GOING TO BE A LUCKY YEAR!

IT MIGHT'VE BEEN A MESSEN-GER FROM THE SPIRITS!

LIKE THE SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAIN SET IT UP OR SOME-THING!

MAYBE MY NEW YEAR'S PRAYERS WORKED!

HARUHI SEEMS HAPPY.

AS LONG AS THAT'S THE CASE, I CAN'T COMPLAIN.

HUH?

IS THAT MARK THE MARK OF THIS MOUNTAIN OR SKI AREA OR SOME-THING?

TSURUYA-SAN, DO YOU HAVE A SECOND?

THIS SHRINE WAS MOVED HERE WHEN THE SKI AREA WAS BUILT.

NYO-HO-HO, THAT'S SILLY!

I SAW IT ON THE OTHER SHRINE TOO.

△°△

APPAR-ENTLY IT HAD QUITE A LOT OF HISTORY BEHIND IT.

THERE WAS SOME OPPOSITION TO MOVING IT TOO.

ARE YOU SURE YOU AREN'T MIXING THEM UP?

THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANY OTHERS LIKE IT ANYMORE.

THE CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE POINTED TO ANOTHER STRANGE PHENOMENON.

MAN, OH MAN.

I WONDER.

WAS THIS LIKE THAT?

THERE WAS THAT INCIDENT WITH THE PASSENGER PIGEONS OR WHATEVER BEING BROUGHT BACK.

SOME OF MY IDEAS MAY NEED ADJUSTING.

NO, THERE'S SOMETHING I CAN'T MAKE SENSE OF.

YOU DON'T SOUND TOO CONFIDENT.

DOESN'T THE WORLD CHANGE FOR HARUHI?

OR EVEN WHAT WE THINK OF AS THE WORLD?

WHAT IS OUR COMMON SENSE, REALLY?

BUT IT'S PROBABLY A SIMPLE ONE— FRIEND, ENEMY, FOOD.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF WORLD THEY SEE.

ZUZU (SIP)

ズズ

SOME ANIMALS CAN USE SONAR OR HEAR ULTRA-SONIC WAVES.

HUMANS PROCESS THEIR SURROUND-INGS WITH THEIR FIVE SENSES.

THIS IS THE SO-CALLED "SELF-CENTERED WORLD."

A TOTALLY DIFFERENT WORLD FROM THAT OF HUMANS.

YOU MEAN HARUHI'S POWER GAVE THE WOLF THE ABILITY TO SEND OUT AN S.O.S. SIGNAL?

YOU EVEN SAID "WHAT IS THE WORLD?"

AND HERE COMES THE LECTURE. REALLY?

THE PROBLEM IS THAT IT'S AN EXTINCT SPECIES OF WOLF.

THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT AT FIRST, YES.

WHEE! UP YOU GO!

FROM WHAT WE'VE SEEN, SHE DOESN'T APPEAR TO HAVE ANY PARTICULAR AFFINITY TOWARDS ANIMALS.

SHE SURE DOESN'T HATE 'EM EITHER, THOUGH.

AND IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE THAT THEY'RE BOTH BECAUSE HARUHI WISHED TO BRING AN EXTINCT SPECIES BACK.

THIS IS THE SECOND TIME AN EXTINCT SPECIES HAS APPEARED TO US.

WHAT'S INTERESTING IS THAT YOU COULD SAY THAT THEY STILL UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING ABOUT THE WORLD.

YOU COULD SAY THAT ANIMALS LIVE IN A SIMPLIFIED WORLD.

HERE IS WHERE THE SELF-CENTERED WORLD I MENTIONED BEFORE COMES INTO PLAY.

AND JUST AS IT APPLIES TO OTHER LIVING THINGS IN THIS WORLD, THE THEORY ALSO APPLIES TO US.

BECAUSE THERE'S NOTHING ELSE THEY NEED TO UNDER-STAND.

BECAUSE IN THE SELF-CENTERED WORLD, EVERYTHING IS NECESSARILY ILLUSION.

IT EXPLAINS WHY THE WORLD IS SO CONVEN-IENTLY SET UP FOR US.

AND THESE ANIMALS MAY HAVE MERELY BEEN EXCLUDED FROM OUR SELF-CENTERED WORLD.

THE WOLF MAY INDEED POSSESS A HIGHER LEVEL OF INTELLI-GENCE.

AND THE PASSENGER PIGEON IS NOT EXTINCT.

AND A CAT CAN TALK.

SO WHAT OF A THEORY THAT WOULD ALLOW US TO SEE SUCH THINGS?

AND WE JUST DIDN'T KNOW.

OR RATHER, WE EXCLUDED THAT KNOW-LEDGE.

...BUT AS USUAL, IT'S PRETTY HARD TO SWALLOW.

BASA

BASA (FLAP)

YOUR REASONING MIGHT MAKE SENSE...

IN THE PROCESS OF LIVING, AS YOU EXPAND YOUR OWN CAPABILITIES, YOU ELIMINATE NOISE.

THIS IS ANOTHER FORM OF EVOLUTION.

WHEN I THINK ABOUT GETTING TO EXPERIENCE THAT FOR ANOTHER YEAR, IT MOVES ME TO TEARS.

AND MY HAT'S OFF TO YOU.

TAKING EVERY POSSIBILITY INTO ACCOUNT IS PART OF MY JOB, YOU SEE.

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT THAT WAY, SUZUMIYA-SAN IS SIMPLY OPENING OUR EYES.

...WHAT ABOUT ARAKAWA-SAN, TREATING A SUPPOSEDLY EXTINCT SPECIES?

WOULDN'T HE NOTICE?

...WAIT A SEC.

EITHER WAY, IT SEEMS LIKE HARUHI'S ACTIVITIES ARE HEADING TO A CONCLUSION, BUT...

I WONDER WHY NOT.

...THAT'S A GOOD POINT.

HE'S PLAYING DUMB WITH ME

WAI (YAY)

WAI

I'M A MEMBER OF THE AGENCY AS WELL, SO I'LL ASK ABOUT IT LATER.

THANK YOU FOR POINTING THAT OUT.

OR PERHAPS WE WERE INCORRECT IN OUR IDENTI-FICATION OF IT AS A JAPANESE WOLF...

PERHAPS THE JAPANESE WOLF IS NOT SO VERY DIFFERENT FROM A REGULAR WOLF...

HEY, KYON, CAN WE GET A WOLF?

OR A DOG THAT LOOKS LIKE ONE?

HE WASN'T EVEN THAT BIG.

SORTA LIKE A RASCALLY DOG!

I CAN'T BELIEVE WOLVES ARE SO CUTE!

TOTALLY NOT LIKE WHAT I IMAGINED!

GIRLS SURE DO LIKE ANIMALS.

IT'S RIDICULOUS HOW MUCH THEY CAN MESS UP ALL SENSE OF REASON.

I'M JUST NOT GONNA SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF.

'COS THERE'S A LOT OF SMALL STUFF.

AM I RIGHT?

TRUER WORDS.

I'M THE ONE WHO SAID SIMPLE THINKING IS IMPORTANT ANYWAY.

Red Data Elegy : END

TO BE CONTINUED

AND AMID COLLIDING EXPECTATIONS...

KYON MAKES HIS DECISION AND HEADS TO A CERTAIN PLACE WITH NAGATO AND MIKURU. IT IS...

IT HAPPENED THE EVENING THEY RETURNED FROM THE WINTER TRIP.

NAGATO'S FIRST EMOTIONAL REACTION...!?

...THAT DECEMBER 18TH!!

NEXT VOLUME:
THE EPILOGUE TO THE "DISAPPEARANCE" ARC, "THE MELANCHOLY OF ASAHINA MIKURU," AND "EDITOR IN CHIEF★FULL SPEED AHEAD!"

The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya

11

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